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LECTURES, ADDRESSES

AND OTHER

LITERARY REMAINS

BY THE LATE

REV. FREDERICK W. ROBERTSON, M.A.

OF BRIGHTON

A NEW EDITION



HENRY S. KING & CO., LONDON

1876

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TO
WORKING MEN
AND ESPECIALLY TO THE
WORKING MEN OF BRIGHTON

This Volume

CONTAINING SO MANY OF THEIR FRIEND'S UTTERANCES IN THEIR BEHALF

Is Cordially Dedicated

PREFACE.

THIS volume consists of Lectures and Addresses delivered by the late Rev. Frederick W. Robertson before the members of the Working Man's Institute, or of the Athenæum at Brighton, to which have been added some Speeches delivered on occasions of public interest.

It may be fitting, by way of Preface to these Addresses, some of which have been published before in separate forms, to give a brief account of the circumstances attending their delivery. A few letters have been added as bearing directly on the subjects.

The first was the opening address of the Working Man's Institute at Brighton, in 1848. This Institution mainly owed its origin to the late Mr. Holtham, who, having always felt a warm interest in the progress of the working classes, elaborated, during a severe illness, a plan of a Literary Institute, which was to be governed entirely by the workingmen. They were to owe no part of their management to the patronage or assistance of their richer neighbours, although they were willing that such should contribute to

the funds of the Institution, and even become honorary members.

The Committee were very desirous that Mr. Robertson should open the Institute with an Address, and accordingly Mr. Holtham, the President, wrote to him on the subject.

He shrank with characteristic but needless modesty from taking so prominent a position, but finally consented, feeling deeply the great importance of the step he and the other promoters of the Institute were taking.

The Address was delivered and created a great sensation amongst all classes. It was marked by extraordinary oratorical power, and evinced a faculty for addressing a popular assembly greater even than had been expected.

The original plan of the Working Man's Institute failed : doubtless because it was based on a selfish policy of class isolation, rather than on the broad principle of union one with another. Some of the elements of its weakness may be traced in the second address which Mr. Robertson delivered to the members of this body. The result of that address was a determination by the majority to construct an association on wiser principles, and during the progress of this work, the success of which was very much owing to the zeal and energy of the Secretary and the Committee, Mr. Robertson was ever ready with wise counsel and efficient help. His heart was deeply with the working-men, and plans and efforts for their elevation occupied much of his thought.

The Committee were anxious that Mr. Robertson should be the President of the New Association, and though he

felt it best to refuse the invitation, he cordially gave his help to the struggling Institution, when some months afterwards he was requested to deliver a lecture to its members.

The Society, though it has now ceased to exist, long worked admirably and efficiently under the name of the Brighton Mechanics' Institute, on principles which Mr. Robertson considered to be more in accordance with sound views of social and political economy.

The 'Two Lectures on the Influence of Poetry' were given before the Institution, in fulfilment of a promise previously made, and their delivery created a great sensation. To those who never heard Mr. Robertson speak, it may be interesting to learn that he was gifted with a voice of wonderful sweetness and power. So flexible and harmonious was it, that it gave expression to the finest tones of feeling ; so thrilling, that it stirred men to the heart. His gesture was simple and quiet:—his whole soul so thoroughly absorbed in his subject that all was intensely real, natural, and earnest.

The lecture on Wordsworth was delivered before the members of the Athenæum, and was to have been followed by a second on the same subject ; but Mr. Robertson's health was never afterwards equal to the exertion. This lecture has not had the advantage of his own corrections. He was criticised by the *South Church Union Chronicle* as teaching in it 'Pantheism,' and as unfairly attacking High Churchmen. To this he replied in the following letter :—

'In the columns of the *Brighton Guardian*, denominated

the *South Church Union Chronicle*, I see some strictures on certain expressions attributed to me in my lecture upon Wordsworth. With the tone of the strictures, excepting one sentence which I regret—not for my own sake, for it is untrue, but for the writer's sake, for it is rude and coarse—I can find no fault. The whole criticism, however, is based on a misconception. It proceeds on the assumption that I complained, with blame, that—

““ High Churchism regarded with peculiar reverence a sanctity as connected with certain places, times, acts, and persons,” &c.

‘I did not use those words. That was not my definition of High Churchism; and to have condemned it as so defined would have contradicted my argument, for I was actually at the moment justifying Wordsworth, who is well known to have entertained such feelings. Had I so spoken, I should have condemned a feeling of the *relative* sanctity of such things; a feeling which I comprehend too entirely to have any inclination to interfere with.

‘What I did say was as follows:—“The tendency of Pantheism is to see the godlike everywhere, the personal God nowhere. The tendency of High Churchism is to localise the personal Deity in certain consecrated places, called churches: certain consecrated times, called Sabbaths, fast days, and so forth: certain consecrated acts, sacramental and quasi-sacramental: certain consecrated persons, called priests.”

‘I endeavoured to show that the *tendency* is not necessarily the error: and that there are High Churchmen, like Wordsworth, who recognise in such places, persons, and acts, a sanctity only relative and not intrinsic—relative to the worshippers, without localising or limiting Deity in or to the acts, times, or places: Pantheistic and High Church

tendencies, each false alone, balancing each other in the particular case of such men.

‘I have no intention of entering into controversy on this point ; and I should, according to my hitherto invariable practice, have left both the misrepresentation and the criticism unnoticed, were it not that the words, as they stand, if used by me, would have evidenced an unworthy desire of turning aside from my subject to pander to the passions of my audience, and seeking a miserable popularity by an attempt to feed that theological rancour which is the most detestable phase of the religion of the day.

‘I do not merely say that I was not guilty of this paltry work. I say it is simply impossible to me. To affirm, whatever may be taught by our savage polemics, whether Tractarian or Evangelical, that the new commandment is NOT this—“that ye hate one another”—and that discipleship to Christ is proved more by the intensity of love for good than by the vehemence of bitterness against error, is with me a desire too deep, too perpetual, and too unsatisfied, to have allowed the possibility of my joining, even for one moment, in the cowardly cry with which the terrors and the passions of the half-informed are lashed by platform rhetoric into hatred of High Churchmen.’

And, as further elucidating his opinions on these subjects, the following extract from a letter which he wrote about this time will be of interest :—

‘I gratefully accept your hint about the definition of High Churchmanship. I will modify what I said, to prevent misunderstanding. At the same time, as High Churchmanship, in the sense in which I was then speaking, is in my view an error, I must represent it in its most developed, not in its modified form, and as the exact opposite of Pantheism. All

grand truth is the statement of two opposites, not a *via media* between them, nor either of them alone. I conceive Wordsworth to have held both: the Personality of the Eternal Being, and also His diffusion through space. Now I cannot conceal my conviction that it is the vice of High Churchism in its *tendency*, to exaggerate the former of these, by localising Deity in acts, places, &c. It is the vice of Pantheism to hold the latter alone.

‘When a High Churchman fully recognises the latter, as Wordsworth did, I care little for any trifling exaggerations of the former, and I will always fight for him and maintain that his High Churchism has no radical error in it, even though his *expressions* may to my mind seem to predicate locality of Him much more than I should like to do it. But when he represents Personality as a limitation to Time, Space, Acts, &c., instead of recognising it in three essential points, all metaphysical and super-sensual, viz. Consciousness, Will, Character, then I must earnestly and firmly oppose High Churchism, and say that its tendency is to localise: and I must quote anxiously those texts which, taken alone, have a Pantheistic sound. “Howbeit, the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands. Heaven is my throne: Earth is my footstool: what house will ye build for me,” &c.

‘And indeed I do think that this is a very common and very dangerous tendency. I will modify my definition by saying it is the *tendency* of High Churchism. That it is not inseparable from it I showed by defending Wordsworth. High Churchism I hate. High Churchmen, many of them, I love, admire, and sympathise with.’

The speech on the question of closing shops at an earlier hour, is printed from a transcript from the short-hand writer’s notes, aided by such private memoranda as were available;

it was not popular with the *employés*, partly, it is believed, from some little misconception. Mr. Robertson could never be a mere partizan, and his clear judgment saw that, however desirable and right was the object which the young men were striving to attain, there were difficulties to be overcome which it was not wise to ignore; and also that there were two sides to the question, the arguments not being exhausted by denouncing all the masters who hesitated in making the concession, as mean, selfish, and tyrannical.

As delivered, it was a noble speech : it did not of course win the loudest cheers ; but it aided the cause of the young men more effectually than some other speakers did, who raised a temporary enthusiasm by refusing to admit that there were any obstacles but such as were represented by covetousness.

The speech on behalf of the Association for improving the Dwellings of the Working Classes, was remarkable on account of the bitterness which it produced in some minds, owing to the fearlessness with which Mr. Robertson treated the Sabbath question.

At the time of this meeting, the Crystal Palace at Sydenham was being erected, and it was currently reported that the Government had granted a Charter of Incorporation to the Company, with permission to open the building to the public on Sunday. The country was much disturbed thereat, and Brighton was not behind other places in petitioning and holding meetings. Sermons were preached simultaneously in *nearly* all the pulpits in the town, on the

general question of the desecration of the Sabbath ; thousands of tracts on the subject were distributed, and associations formed.

From this movement Mr. Robertson held aloof : he preached a sermon on the subject, which, to many minds, was most conclusive.¹

The occasion on which the next speech was delivered was one of the most interesting ever seen in Brighton. One hundred young men of Mr. Robertson's congregation signed an address to him, expressive of their gratitude for his unwearied zeal in their behalf. They invited him to tea at the Town Hall. Many others were also present, but all were men. That evening is well remembered still. It presented some remarkable features. One of the young men, Mr. C. H. Evans, rose and presented the address, and in doing so spoke with great feeling and earnestness of the benefit which he and the others for whom he was that evening the mouth-piece, had received from Mr. Robertson's teaching. He dwelt on the reconciling, harmonising spirit Mr. Robertson had induced between rich and poor—between the strugglers in life and their lot. He reviewed the characteristics of Mr. Robertson's public ministry, and vindicated it from the charges which had recently been brought against it in the columns of a certain party journal ; and having adverted to

¹ This Sermon is published in the Second Series of Mr. Robertson's Sermons, and should be read by any one desirous of understanding Mr. Robertson's views on this question, as it is treated there more completely than it was possible to do in a letter. There is also a Sermon on the "Shadow and Substance of the Sabbath," in the First Series, which may be read with advantage.

the altered state of feeling in the working classes of the town, which he attributed mainly to Mr. Robertson's efforts to bring about a union of classes, expressed an earnest hope that long—very long—might the town have the benefit of his talents and self-devotion.

All rose as he spoke. Mr. Robertson was deeply moved. All felt that if there were many ministers like him, how far brighter would become the prospect of a kingdom of Heaven upon earth.

The next speech was delivered on the memorable occasion of the attempt of Pope Pius IX. to parcel out England into Ecclesiastical Dioceses under Romish bishops, with Cardinal Wiseman as the head of the new hierarchy. Every one will remember how that attempt was received. From one end of England to the other, one unanimous voice arose, 'We will have nothing to do with Rome!' One of the largest meetings ever held at Brighton came together on this occasion to protest against this impertinent intrusion. All sects, all classes, met here on common ground—a stern determination that, whatever foreign despots might succeed in imposing on *their* peoples, Englishmen were determined never again to wear the yoke of priestly tyranny, least of all, the tyranny of Rome. It will be observed that the ground Mr. Robertson took was somewhat broader than that generally occupied. He rested his opposition to the Pope's decree on the inalienable rights of the individual conscience, in virtue of which it was not competent for any priest, or church, to dictate to men the terms of their belief.

Probably the controversy with Popery would be more effectual and more practical in its results, if the opinions which Mr. Robertson avowed were taken as the basis on which it should be conducted.

In former years, Mr. Robertson had delivered a lecture at Cheltenham, on the Church of England's Independence of the Church of Rome ; it is for the first time published here. It is marked by careful historical research, as well as by its freedom from merely passionate appeals to prejudice, while it is firm and uncompromising in its tone.

The next thing in order in this volume is the Lecture delivered at the opening of a Reading-room at Hurstpierpoint, a village about eight miles from Brighton, and which lecture Mr. Robertson consented to deliver from motives of personal friendship.

A reporter was present, and a fair copy from his notes was given to Mr. Robertson. That fair copy cannot now be discovered, and as these notes, in his own handwriting, appear to be the original preparative sketch of his lecture, and are so exceedingly suggestive, it has been judged better to print them as they were found.

The friend at whose instance this lecture was delivered writes :—

‘ * * * although the language used by Mr. Robertson was much above the comprehension of the agricultural class of the village, whose life is more marked by its stern contentment than of much self-education through the medium of books, yet I am able to record that there was nevertheless such a charm about this lecture as to excite a

considerable number of the audience to request its immediate publication.'

It is very noteworthy, that nearly all these public efforts of Mr. Robertson were in behalf of those engaged in labour. He had a high idea of work, regarding it as God's appointment for every man ; and while he always avowed his belief that the men of thought were labourers, as much as the men of action, he never lost an opportunity of urging on his hearers that a mere life of pleasure or fashion—the life of busy idleness—was little better than living death. Some of his noblest utterances were those in which he sought to rouse men up to doing something better worthy of the vocation by which they were called. His own life was one long labour, of which, while others were marvelling at the wonderful gifts and graces it displayed, his own thought ever seemed to be 'not as though I had attained it.'

When many of the clergy and richer classes were looking suspiciously at the growing intelligence of working men, and connecting it with revolutionary events then going on in Europe, Mr. Robertson threw himself boldly into their cause, and avowed his belief that they had rights which, if trampled on, it was at the peril of the social fabric ; that they had wrongs which it were well for England if she recognised and set herself steadily to remedy. In public and private he ever sought to bring classes together.

His pulpit ministrations were chiefly addressed to the richer classes of society, and he never failed to warn them, with a stern yet loving faithfulness, respecting the special responsibilities and temptations to which they were exposed.

Most unflinchingly did he seek to impress upon them the duties they owed to those below them in the social scale ;¹ while, in speaking to labouring men, he as faithfully told them that one great cause why they were depressed and degraded was to be found in themselves : that when they could exercise self-denial, temperance, steadfastness in self-improvement, it would be simply impossible for any one to keep them down. He told them, too, that in obtaining the mastery over self, they were attaining in God's kingdom a rank and a nobility greater than any mere earthly title could confer. And both classes responded to his earnest zeal for their welfare, with a genuine love, which is very touching, in a day of conventional flattery and mutual self-laudation.

¹ See "The Church's Message to Men of Wealth ;" published in the First Series of his Sermons.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
AN ADDRESS	I
<i>Delivered at the Opening of the Working Men's Institute, on Monday, October 23rd, 1848, by the Rev. Fred. W. Robertson, M.A.</i>	
AN ADDRESS	35
<i>Delivered to the Members of the Working Men's Institute, at the Town Hall, Brighton, on Thursday, April 18th, 1850, on the Question of the Introduction of Sceptical Publications into their Library.</i>	
TWO LECTURES ON THE INFLUENCE OF POETRY ON THE WORKING CLASSES.—LECTURE I.	68
<i>Delivered before the Members of the Mechanics' Institution, February 1852.</i>	
LECTURE II.	105
LECTURE ON WORDSWORTH	150
<i>Delivered to the Members of the Brighton Athenæum, on Feb- ruary 10th, 1853.</i>	
A SPEECH	192
<i>Delivered at the Town Hall, Brighton, April 24th, 1849, at a Meeting of the Inhabitants, called by the Early Closing Association, presided over by the Bishop of Chichester.</i>	

SPEECH	PAGE 206
<i>Delivered at a Meeting of the Brighton District Association for improving the Dwellings of the Industrial Classes, held at the Pavilion, Brighton, November 25th, 1852.</i>	
A SPEECH	215
<i>In reply to an Address presented to him by One Hundred Young Men of his Congregation, at the Town Hall, Brighton, April 20th, 1852,</i>	
A SPEECH	218
<i>Delivered at the Town Hall, Brighton, November 14th, 1850, at a Meeting held for the Purpose of Addressing the Queen in reference to the attempt of the Pope of Rome to parcel England out into Ecclesiastical Dioceses under Cardinal Wiseman.</i>	
THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND'S INDEPENDENCE OF THE CHURCH OF ROME	223
<i>A Lecture delivered to the Cheltenham Church of England Reading Association in 1845.</i>	
NOTES OF A LECTURE ON THE PROGRESS OF THE WORKING CLASSES	250
<i>Delivered at Hurstpierpoint, in 1851, to the Members of a Working Men's Reading Room.</i>	
ON THE PROGRESS OF THE WORKING CLASSES	256
<i>Shorthand Notes of a Lecture delivered at Hurstpierpoint (uncorrected).</i>	
THE EDUCATION OF THE HUMAN RACE	277
ANALYSIS OF MR. TENNYSON'S "IN MEMORIAM"	307

ADDRESSES AND LITERARY REMAINS.

AN ADDRESS

Delivered at the Opening of the Working Men's Institute, on Monday, October 23rd, 1848, by the Rev. Fred. W. Robertson, M.A.*

BROTHER MEN AND FELLOW-TOWNSMEN,

I OWE it to you and I owe it to myself to give some explanation of my being here to-night to deliver an opening address to the Working Men's Institute. I owe it to you, or rather to some of you, since it is only a few weeks ago that, on the plea of ill health, I professed myself unable to deliver a lecture to the Brighton Athenæum. Almost immediately after that I accepted your invitation, in which there is an apparent inconsistency. I owe it to myself,

* A third edition of this Pamphlet having been called for, I have sent it to the press unaltered ; for though the Working Men's Institute, owing to certain errors in the details of its organization, has for the present ended in partial failure, yet the very circumstances of its history have only confirmed me more than ever in the principles which it was attempted to express in the following pages.—F. W. R., Oct. 1850.

because there will lie against me in the judgment of many a charge of presumption. I have been in this town but a single year. I am but a stranger here. For one without name, without influence, without authority, without talent, to occupy a position so prominent as that which I occupy to-night, would really seem to justify a suspicion of something like vanity and assumption.

My reasons for undertaking this office are these. I did it partly on personal grounds. It would be affectation to deny that the spontaneous request of a body of men delegated by a thousand of my fellow-townsmen is a source of very great satisfaction. It gave me great pleasure, at the same time that it deeply humbled me. I earnestly wish I were more worthy of the confidence reposed in me.

My second reason for standing before you to-night is a public one. It seems to me a significant circumstance that your request was made to a clergyman of the Church of England. A minister of the Church of England occupies a very peculiar position. He stands, generally by birth, always by position, between the higher and lower ranks. He has free access to the mansion of the noble, and welcome in the cottage of the labourer. And if I understand aright the mission of a minister of the Church of England, his peculiar and sacred call is, to stand as a link of union between the two extremes of society; to demand of the highest in this land, with all respect but yet firmly, the performance of their duty to those beneath them; to soften down the asperities and to soothe the burning jealousies which are too often found rankling in the minds of those who, from a position full of wretchedness, look up with almost excusable bitterness on such as are surrounded with earthly comforts.

It seemed to me that such an opportunity was offered me to-night. The delivery of a lecture to the Brighton Athenæum on a literary subject was a secular duty, and one from which I felt I might fairly shrink on the valid plea of ill health; but the demand that you made upon me for this evening, though I urged it upon you that you had not selected the right man, was a sacred duty, which I felt it was impossible for me on any merely personal grounds to refuse. And if your call on a minister of the Church of England this evening may be taken as any exhibition of trust in the sympathy of those classes between whom and yourselves he stands as a kind of link—if my acceptance of the call may be regarded as evincing a pledge of their sympathy towards you—then, though all I say to-night may be weak and worthless, I shall not feel that I have spoken to you in vain, and to myself at least I shall stand acquitted of the charge of presumption.

I began to address you to-night by the name of brother men; I did not adopt the expression which my friend Mr. Holtham used in reference to your Committee. Yet, after all, we are at one. He did not mean to say that you are “gentlemen.” He meant to say that you have, and that there was no reason why you should not have, the feelings of gentlemen. To say that a man is noble, does not mean that he is a nobleman. I do not call you gentlemen, because I respect you too much to call you what you are not. You are *not* gentlemen: To address an assembly of gentlemen by the title of “my lords” would be to insult them; and to address working men as “gentlemen” would be felt by you as an insult to your understanding.

The people of this country stand in danger from two classes—from those who fear them, and from those who

flatter them. From those who fear them and would keep down their aspiring intelligence, they have no longer much to fear. The time is past for that ; that cry of a wretched, narrow bigotry is almost unheard of now. But just in proportion as that danger has passed away has the other danger increased—the danger from those who flatter them. From the platform and the press we now hear language of fulsome adulation, that ought to disgust the working men of this country. There has ever been and ever will be found sycophancy on the side of power.

In former ages, when power was on the side of the few, the flatterer was found in kings' houses. The balance of power is changed. It is now not in the hands of the few, but in the hands of the many. I say not that that is the best state conceivable; there might be a better than that. We would rather have power neither in the hands of the privileged few nor in the hands of the privileged many, but in the hands of the wisest and best. But this is the present fact, and every day is carrying the tide of power more strongly into the hands of the numbers; for which reason there will be ever found flatterers on the side of the many.

Now, whether a man flatters the many or the few, the flatterer is a despicable character. It matters not in what age he appears: change the century, you do not change the man. He who fawned upon the prince or upon the duke had something of the reptile in his character; but he who fawns upon the masses in their day of power is only a reptile which has changed the direction of its crawling. He who in this nineteenth century echoes the cry that the voice of the people is the voice of God, is just the man who, if he had been born two thousand years ago, would have been the loudest and hoarsest in that cringing crowd of slaves who

bowed before a prince invested with the delegated majesty of Rome, and cried, "It is the voice of a god, and not of a man."

The man who can see no other source of law than the will of a majority, who can feel no everlasting law of right and wrong, which gives to all human laws their sanction and their meaning, and by which all laws, whether they express the will of the many or of the few, must be tried—who does not feel that he, single and unsupported, is called upon by a mighty voice within him to resist everything which comes to him claiming his allegiance as the expression of mere will—is exactly the man who, if he had lived seven centuries ago, would have stood on the sea-sands beside the royal Dane, and tried to make him believe that his will gave law to the everlasting flood.

For this reason I have not used this expression. I have not used it, because I would not flatter you even by an epithet. I respect you too much to flatter you. I used another title of address. For there are two bases of union on which men may be bound together. One is similarity of class, the other is identity of nature. The class feeling is a feeble bond; for he who feels awe for another man because he is in a rank above him, will cease to feel that awe if ever the man should cease to belong to that class. The pauperised aristocrat and the decayed merchant are soon neglected by their class. The man who respects another because he is in the same rank as himself may cease to feel respect in one of two ways—either by his own elevation, in which case he tries to keep the distinction broad between himself and the class that he has left, or else by the depression of that other man, through any misfortune.

Now, there is another and a broader bond of union to be

found in identity of nature. When all external differences have passed away, one element remains intact, unchanged, the everlasting basis of our common nature—the human soul, by which we live. “We are all changed by slow degrees. All but the basis of the soul.” Our tendencies to evil, our capacities of excellence, are the same in all classes. It is just in proportion as men recognise this real, original identity of all human nature, that it is possible on this earth to attain the realisation of human brotherhood. It is the only possible ground of union for the race. It was because this was not felt by the Jews of ancient times that they held themselves and their race proudly distinct from their Gentile brothers, and by that bigotry worked out their own inevitable downfall. The Christian of the middle ages tortured his Jew brother just because he did not recognise the same identity of sentiment and moral nature, which the great poet of our country has put so passionately and so touchingly into the lips of Shylock. “Hath not a Jew eyes? hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer as a Christian?” Had the feudal lord believed this, he would not have put an iron collar round his serf’s neck, nor made one law for the serf and another for the free-born.

In our own times, if men who have been crying for the rights of our common humanity and the duties of our common brotherhood had understood the deep glorious meaning of their own cry, we should have heard nothing of those human tortures and that infernal cannibalism which have disgraced the cause of freedom. Get this deeply by heart, and all that is galling in artificial distinctions will pass

away. Well do I know that this language I am using now respecting brotherhood and the equality of our human nature, is language that passes into cant. It has been defiled by cruelty; it has been polluted by selfishness; but we will not be ashamed of it, for all that. In an age in which it has become suspicious, we will dare to believe in it and love it. It is buried deep in the eternal truth of things. That truth can no more pass away from the things that are, than heaven and earth can pass away. Sooner or later, it must be realised in a more substantial form than it has yet ever assumed. All gradual improvements, all violent convulsions in the world, are only doing their part in bringing this about. The thunder storm is terrible to look upon; but it leaves behind it a purer air and a serener sky. Let us hear the Ayrshire ploughman, in his high prophetic strain:

“For a’ that, and a’ that,
It’s coming yet for a’ that,
That man to man the world o’er
Shall brothers be for a’ that.”

Therefore it is that, passing by all those abortive attempts which would fain produce a feeling of union by the false idea of similarity of class, I have fastened my attention on the real equality of our common nature, and called you “brother men.”

In my address to-night, I propose to let its topics be suggested by the expressions of your own sentiments contained in the paper which your Committee put into my hand. That paper specifies the objects of your Institution, and the spirit in which it has been established.

The objects of the Institution are two: it is intended to provide the working men of this town with the means of

mental, and, besides that, with the means of moral, improvement. Further down I find mental improvement separated by you into two divisions. Mental improvement, you say, is the information of the intellect, and the elevation of the taste. You wish to inform the intellect. I confine myself to-night to one branch of this improvement, political information. I do it for several reasons. First of all, the means of acquiring knowledge which your Institution places in your hands are in a very preponderating degree of a political character. By works of history and the newspapers of the day you will have that which will inform you of the constitution of your country.

My second reason for dwelling chiefly upon this branch of mental improvement is, that political science is the highest education that can be given to the human mind. Let me explain myself. When we in popular phraseology speak of politics, we ascribe to that word a narrow meaning. When we say that two men are talking politics, we often mean that they are wrangling about some mere party question. When I use the term "politics" this evening, I use it in the sense in which it was used by all the great and noble authors of the ancient world, who meant by the science of politics the intelligent comprehension of a man's position and relations as a member of a great nation.

You will observe that in this sense politics subordinate to themselves every department of earthly science. A man who understands nothing of agriculture, nothing of trade, nothing of human nature, nothing of past history, nothing of the principles of law, cannot pretend to be more than a mere empiric in political legislation. Everything that man can know is subservient to this noble science. Understood in this sense, the working men of this country have an

interest in politics. For, in the first place, political ignorance is not a safe thing for this or any other country. The past is a proof of that. What was it but political ignorance which dictated a few years ago the letters signed "Swing," when the labouring men burned the hay rick and the corn stack in the wise expectation of bettering their own condition by that?

It needed very little political economy to teach them that all the wages in the world would not make a country rich when its real resources are destroyed ; that gold is but the symbol of another and a more real wealth, for which it stands as the convenient expression ; that the increase of their money would not give any increase in their comforts ; and that when the country's means of subsistence are diminished, all the coin in the country could not enrich them. What was it but political ignorance that suggested the workman's strike for wages? A very little political information would have told him that it is to a small extent that the master can regulate the wages he gives, that they depend on many things over which he has no control—as, for instance, on the supply of labour in the market and on the demand for the commodity.

Besides this, if there be a man in the country to whom politics are of personal consequence, it is the labouring man. A man in the higher classes may turn his attention to them, if he likes ; nothing *forces* him to do so. It is to him a matter of amusement, a speculation—a theoretical curiosity—not necessarily anything more. The difference of a penny in the price of a loaf makes no perceptible change on his table ; but it may make the poor man's grate empty for a fortnight. If an unfair tax be imposed, a man in the upper ranks will scarcely be compelled to retrench a luxury

in his establishment ; but to the poor man it is almost a matter of life and death. Therefore a labouring man will be, must be, a politician ; he cannot help it : and the only question is, whether he shall be an informed one or an uninformed one. To him politics are a thing of daily feeling ; but the man who feels a wrong most severely is not generally the man who is in the best state for calmly ascertaining the causes of the wrong.

The child which feels the pin that pricks knows better than any one can tell it that there is something wrong ; but it is not exactly the one to judge, when it strikes at random, whether it be the nurse's fault or the fault of circumstances. The uneducated man is precisely in the same position ; he feels politically the sharpness and the torture of his position ; but he is just as likely in his exasperation to raise his hand against an innocent government as against a guilty one. Therefore it was that in past times, when a pestilence came, the poorer classes, believing that it was caused by the medical men of the country for their own benefit, visited their fury upon them. They felt keenly, they struck wrongly. Tell us, then, whether it be safe and whether it be wise that the poor man, or that any class, should be profoundly ignorant of politics.

There is another reason, one more important still, for extending political knowledge. In this free country, the labouring man has already a political responsibility. By degrees, he will have, and ought to have, more. There is scarcely a man standing before me who has not something to do with the political government of his country. It may be that he has a vote in the vestry ; or he is liable to be called on to serve on the jury, where he disposes of the life and liberty of his fellow-subjects ; or perhaps he has a vote in the election of a member of parliament. The possession

of that vote gives to the working man a solemn responsibility. Let us not be told that the injury done by a wrong vote is small ; it is not so that we measure responsibility. If there be a million voters, and a man votes corruptly, it is true, it is but the millionth part of the injury which may arise from a bad law that is attributable to him ; but responsibility is measured not by the amount of injury which results, but by the measure of distinctness with which the conscience has the opportunity of distinguishing between right and wrong.

That man is not worthy of a vote in this country who gives his vote to the temptation of a bribe ; neither is he worthy who bribes a man to vote against his conscience. That man is not worthy of a vote who intimidates another ; nor is he worthy who suffers himself to be intimidated. That man misuses his privilege who corrupts by exclusive dealing ; so does he who votes solely from self or class interest. For example, if the agriculturist voted for the retention of the corn laws because they enhanced the price of his corn, though he believed it would be to the injury of the rest of the community, that man was not worthy of a vote. On the other hand, if the manufacturer voted for the abolition of the corn laws because he believed it would be good for the manufacturing interest, without considering how it would bear on the residue of the nation, that man exercised his vote wrongly ; his vote was given him for the good of the nation, and he was sacrificing the whole of the nation to a part of it.

Now let me say another thing without offence. I scarcely know whether it is quite fair to say it on this occasion ; but I feel perfectly confident that every honest supporter of the People's Charter will not misunderstand me. I will not say

that that man is not worthy of a vote ; but I will say, and I believe your feelings will only echo mine, that that man has not attained the true, lofty spirit of a British freeman who requires the protection of secrecy in his voting, who dares not risk the consequence of doing right, who has not manhood enough, except from behind the ballot box, to do his duty to his country and his God. Now to vote in this way, to vote incorruptibly, to vote on high motives, to vote on large principles, to vote bravely, requires a great amount of information. How far will the machinery of this Institution ensure this? Only partially. We do not expect it will make the corrupt voter honest ; it will not make the selfish voter liberal ; but at least it offers the means of saving the honest voter from the consequences of his own ignorance, and of rescuing him from being the passive victim of the demagogue, or being compelled to throw his vote blindly into the hands of his landlord or his employer.

I pass to the second division of which you speak, the elevation of the taste. Taste is perception of beauty ; to have taste is to recognise that which is right and congruous. When we speak of the moral sense, we mean the power of distinguishing between right and wrong ; when we speak of taste, we mean the faculty of distinguishing that which is fitting from that which is unbecoming.

There are many things which are neither right nor wrong, but which are yet offensive to good taste. It is not morally wrong to sit covered in the presence of a superior ; but it is an offence against the propriety of manners. The juxtaposition of yellow and olive green is not a moral fault ; but it is a fault to the eye, which perceives the harmony of colours. There is nothing *wicked* in wearing a hat in a sacred building, or in discussing religious questions when the toast

and the health are going round ; but there is something which is exceedingly offensive to the feelings of religious propriety.

The perception of all these harmonious fitnesses is what we denominate refinement, in contradistinction to vulgarity. But by vulgarity I do not mean the infringement of those laws which conventionality or fashion has laid down ; for if fashion choose to decide that a man shall dine at seven, and he prefers instead to dine at one, though this may be a conventional, it is not a real vulgarism.

Vulgarity is quite distinct from nonconformity to arbitrary rules. We have sometimes met the deepest, truest refinement of heart in the man whose hands are black with labouring at the forge ; we have met the greatest real vulgarity in the man whose manners wore a perfect outward polish, and who would never infringe the smallest rule of etiquette. In this sense do I speak of taste as a matter of importance to the working men of this country.

What is it that prevents sympathy between class and class ? Not merely difference of opinion, but difference of taste. The difference in feeling between educated and uneducated men places a great gulf between them. We are attracted and repelled by our instinctive sympathies even more than by our intellectual views. Let no one tell us that the workman cannot become refined ; he is a refined man in foreign countries. Vulgarity is a thing almost exclusively English. Look at the poor Hindoo who goes through your streets asking alms. There is a grace even in his very attitude, an elegance in his address, which would almost make you believe it if you were told that he had been a prince in his own land. You may see, or might have seen, two peasants meeting on a high road in France,

and taking off their hats to each other with grave and dignified courtesy. The French peasant girl at a very trifling expense will dress herself in clothes that befit her station ; but the inward refinement of her mind will be so reflected on the adjustment of every part of them, that she looks better dressed than the English lady's-maid, with all the aid of her mistress's cast-off finery.

There is another thing. The refinement of the workman's mind is a matter of importance in the works of art. Let any mercer place the silk that comes from Spitalfields beside that which comes from Lyons, and tell us if the one in point of elegance of design will bear any comparison with the other? Let the English watchmaker place his watch beside the delicate fabric of Geneva, or his clock beside that which comes from Paris, and tell us whether it be not rude and clumsy in comparison. Let the English china-maker place the manufactures of Worcestershire and Yorkshire on the same table with those of Sèvres or of Dresden, and the superior beauty of the foreign article is visible at once. We are beaten out of the market whenever it comes to a question of taste.

The reason is generally acknowledged to be this—that on the continent the artist has freer access to that which is beautiful in taste and art. In the designs which adorn the Parisian clocks, you may trace the forms of beauty which existed originally in the minds of Raffaele and Titian, and transfused themselves upon the work insensibly through every touch of one whose fancy had been inspired and kindled at the living sources of the beautiful.

A few years ago I was engaged in chamois hunting among the crags and glaciers of the Tyrol. My companion was a Tyrolese chamois hunter, a man who, in point of

social position, might rank with an English labourer. I fear there would be a difficulty in England in making such a companionship pleasurable and easy to both parties; there would be a painful obsequiousness, or else an insolent familiarity, on the one side, constraint on the other. In this case there was nothing of that sort. We walked together and ate together. He had all the independence of a man, but he knew the courtesy which was due to a stranger; and when we parted for the night, he took his leave with a politeness and dignity which would have done no discredit to the most finished gentleman. The reason, as it seemed to me, was that his character had been moulded by the sublimities of the forms of the outward nature, amidst which he lived.

It was impossible to see the clouds wreathing themselves in that strange wild way of theirs round the mountain crests, till the hills seemed to become awful things, instinct with life—it was impossible to walk, as we did sometimes, an hour or two before sunrise, and see the morning beams gilding with their pure light the grand old peaks on the opposite side of the valley, while we ourselves were still in deepest shade, and look on that man, with his rifle on his shoulder and his curling feather in his high green hat, his very exterior in harmony with all around him, and his calm eye resting on all that wondrous spectacle, without feeling that these things had had their part in making him what he was, and that you were in a country in which men were bound to be polished, bound to be more refined, almost bound to be better men than elsewhere.

Mr. Wordsworth, one of the great teachers of our nation's feeling, has explained to us in many a passage how all these forms of God's outward world of beauty are intended to

perform an office in the refinement of the heart. He has painted his country girl educated by the sky above her, the colours of the hills, the sound of the waterfalls—

“Till beauty, born of murmuring sound,
Shall pass into her face.”

Now there are two things in your Institution which might educate taste of this kind—works of poetry and works of fiction. By poetry we do not mean simply verse or rhyme. In a hundred thousand verses there might be ‘not one thought of poetry. Neither does poetry mean something which is fanciful and unreal. By poetry we mean invisible truth, as distinct from that which is visible. Not *every* invisible truth; not, for example, the invisible truths which are perceivable by the understanding, as mathematics; but the invisible realities which are recognised by the imagination.

We will take an illustration. You look at this England, intersected with its railways, and say it is becoming a dull, prosaic thing. The sentimentalist will tell you it has broken up all the poetry of the scene, because it has run through our pleasure grounds, sadly cut up our old retreats and solitudes, and destroyed all classical associations. So it may have done. It has destroyed that which was associated with the poetry of the past; but it has left us the real poetry of the present. Let men look upon that railroad, and one will see nothing but the machine that conveys the travellers to their destination. This is a truth, but only a visible one. The engineer comes and sees in it another class of truths. It suggests to his mind the idea of broad and narrow gauge; he talks of gradients, &c. Another truth; that which is appreciable by the understanding.

Then let the poet come with that eye of his "glancing from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven," and his imagination creates another class of truths; the suggested meaning of it to him is the triumph of mind over matter; the gradual annihilation of time and space. He sees in these railroads stretched throughout the country the approaching times of peace and human union; and so he bursts out into his high prophetic song of the time—

"When the war drum throbs no more, and the battle flags are furled,
In the parliament of man, the federation of the world."

All this is truth; neither seen nor reasoned truth, but truth to the imagination—truth just as real in its way as the others are in theirs. And this is poetry. For this reason is poetry a thing needful for the working man. His whole life, if he could be taught to feel it, is full of deep, true poetry. The poet teaches him by suggestive inspiration the hidden meaning of common things, transfiguring life, as it were, by shedding a glory on it; and if you will force the poor man to see nothing but the wretched reality that is around him, if you will not let his mind be enlightened by the invisible truth of things, if you will not let him learn from the master-thinkers of the past how in his work, in his smoky cabin, in his home affections, there is a deep significance concealed, connecting him, when he once has felt it, with the highest truths of the invisible world, you condemn the worker to a desolate lot indeed.

You have a second class of means in your Institution for refining taste—works of fiction. It is in vain to rail at these with indiscriminate censure. Read they will be, and read they must be; and if we are asked the reason why works of fiction are matters of importance, the best reply

which has been suggested is, that they enlarge the heart, enabling us to sympathise with the hearts of a larger circle of the human race than that into which our own experience admits us.

You are all familiar with the works of Dickens. The effect of that man's writings upon English feelings and English sympathies is quite incalculable. The peculiar feature of his works is, that their scenes are always placed in the ordinary walks of life. It is the character of all fiction now. The Clarissas and Grandisons of past ages have disappeared, and the life exhibited to us now is that of the lower classes of society. Men who, by reading the works of Cooper, had learned to feel that there was a real human life in the heart of the red Indian of the prairie, and who, by reading the works of Scott, learned that beneath the helmets and mail of iron which rust in our armouries, human passions and affections once beat warm, were insensibly taught by the works of Dickens to feel that in this country, close to their own homes, there was a truth of human life, the existence of which they had not suspected.

We all remember the immense sensation those works made at first. If you asked the lady who was getting out of her coroneted carriage at the bookseller's shop what it was she wanted, you were told she had come to inquire if the new number of Dickens's last work was out yet. If you saw a soldier on the turnpike road, with his knapsack on his back, reading as he went, and stepped up behind him, and looked over his shoulder, hoping perhaps to see that it was a tract, you saw it was the same everlasting Dickens. From the throne to the cottage this was true.

What was the result of this? Imperceptibly, one which all the pulpits of the country would have been glad to com-

bine in producing. The hearts of the rich and poor were felt to throb together. Men came to find that the rustic altar binds together two human hearts of man and woman with exactly the same feelings and anxieties and loves, as the marriage performed in the drawing-room, which united peers and peeresses. They discovered that when death enters into the poor man's hovel, it is just as much a rending asunder of a soul and body as if a spirit had been breathed away beneath a coverlet of silk. They came to find, too, that the lower classes have not a monopoly of all the simplicities of life, nor the upper classes the monopoly of all its absurd pride. People who lived in the highest ranks of life were startled to find that their own foolish jealousies had their exact repetition in the life which was going on beneath them. The ridiculous scorn with which the ancient family looks down upon the newly ennobled, and the newly ennobled looks down upon the newly rich, has its exact counterpart in the sovereign contempt with which the small shopkeeper, in his shop six feet square, looks down on the poor apple-woman who has dared to bring her barrow too near the sacred neighbourhood of his aristocratic board. This was the achievement of these works of fiction. It was a lesson to us all, of humbleness, and sympathy, and mutual toleration ; one step towards expanded love.

And we can see no reason why such works should be injurious to the workman. We believe it is a narrow religion which scowls upon them all without discrimination. And the man of labour is free from one injury which arises to the man of leisure, from reading works of fiction. Works of fiction have in them an excitement for the feelings, in which one of their dangers lies. Every man has experienced how

feelings which end in themselves, and do not express themselves in action, leave the heart debilitated. We get feeble and sickly in character when we feel keenly, and cannot do the things we feel. This is a great danger for the unoccupied and idle in the upper classes ; but it is not possible that it should be so great a danger to the workman ; his labour keeps him safe from it ; so that it is perfectly possible for him, by reading works of fiction, to have his heart purified and refined by sympathy, at the same time that he gets something which is healthy and invigorating to counteract it in his hourly familiarity with the realities of toil and acting.

We come next to the moral improvement which you are anxious to effect. You explain this moral improvement to be "the elevation of the habits of the working man." You have surely begun at the right end. There are two ways of improving a nation's state ; the one is by altering the institutions of the country, the other is by the reformation of its people's character. The one begins from things outward, and expects to effect a change in things inward ; the other takes this line : from things inward to things outward. The latter is the right plan, and you have adopted it.

I believe I am addressing men of every shade of political opinion. There may be amongst us Tories, many of them men of whom, whether they be right or wrong, this country has reason to be proud, for few other soils could produce them ; men who felt that law is but an expression of a divine will, that the sovereign is the symbol of that will, and therefore in their way talked, too, about the divine right of kings, and believed most religiously that the happiness of this country depended on the connection of Church and State.

I know that I address Whigs here to-night, of that party who gave the most distinct expression to their doctrines when, by our glorious Revolution, they stamped for ever on the constitution that great cardinal truth, that law is not the creature of the ruler, but that the ruler is the creature of, and owes his continuance to, the law. It is probable that I speak to Conservatives to-night, who, if we let them give their own account of their opinions, have seen in the teaching of all past history that nations have had their seasons—infancy, manhood, and old age; and believing that England has reached the zenith of her manhood, are consistently opposed to all progress, because every step of progress seems to them a step towards decay.

I may be speaking to Radicals to-night, who, if asked for the definition of their principles, would say, "Radicalism means root-work—the uprooting of all falsehoods and abuses," and who would not hesitate in all solemnity of feeling to sanction their feelings by a divine principle, and take this text for their motto: "Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up."

Lastly, I address men of another class altogether: who have felt burdens which crush the millions of the working classes with intolerable agony; and believing that only by throwing power into the hands of the majority England's happiness can be secured, do therefore honourably and conscientiously build all their hopes on the People's Charter, as the first step to be secured. And whether I agree with their political views or not, I will never shrink from saying, in any society, that I am personally acquainted with Chartists, the integrity of whose purpose, the unselfishness of whose character, the firmness of whose principle is such, that if all resembled them, if all base men, whether high or low, could

only be removed from the land, then the brightest day that England ever saw would be the day on which she got her universal suffrage : for universal suffrage would mean then only the united voices of all good men.

Now, whichever of these views may be right—and I am not going to venture an opinion on that subject this evening—whichever of these opinions may be right, there is a quackery in every one of them that pretends by the realization of itself to give to this country all she needs. For instance, if a Tory gets what he wishes, a perfect loyalty, and his pattern kingdom should only be this, a tyrant sovereign and a nation of slaves, I think he would say himself his Toryism would do us no good. If the Conservative were to obtain his wish, “things as they are,” and this were to leave us nothing but stagnation—moral, political, and intellectual—I think Conservatism would do us no more good than Toryism.

If the Whig and the Radical were to realize their scheme, the entire overthrow of all abuses, the triumph of the sovereignty of law, and yet with that we got, as we might easily get, only a nation without reverence, and the abolition of old sacred associations, the heart of the country being left morally diseased and sick, Whiggism would be as ineffectual as Toryism or Conservatism. Lastly, if the Chartist got all he wanted—universal suffrage, vote by ballot, equal electoral districts, annual parliaments, paid representatives, and no property qualification—and he should succeed in transferring all power into the people’s hands, and yet it were to turn out that the majority were just as corrupt and depraved as the minority had been before them, every honest Chartist will tell us that his Chartism would have been a failure, and was not worth the having.

Now, the plan that you have adopted in this Institution seems to me to exactly reverse that order of procedure. You have said, "We will reform ourselves, and then the institutions will reform themselves." And in doing this you have surely proceeded in the rightful order; for if the heart of a nation be wise and right, you may depend upon it the laws of that nation will never long remain radically wrong. Free institutions will never of themselves make free men out of men who are themselves the slaves to vice; but free men will inevitably express their inward character in their outward institutions. The spirit of every kingdom must begin first "within you."

I now proceed to offer you two or three cautions with respect to your Institution. First, we must not expect too much from it. There is no magic, no enchantment, in a library and reading-room. They will not make a man wise or good in spite of himself, or without effort of his own. They will leave each man what he was before, except that they will put into his hands means of amelioration. The man who was the mere loungee in the streets will become the loungee in the Institute; the man who was the mere miserable politician there will remain the mere politician in the reading-room. The man who got excitement from drinking will now get excitement from the newspaper.

The next suggestion is, that we must be prepared for a great deal of evil. It is utterly impossible to look on this great movement without seeing clearly in the distance a large possibility of evil. The motto on one of your papers is, "Knowledge is power." It is a truth that is glorious, but at the same time terrible. Knowledge is power, power for good and evil. It is a power that may elevate a man by degrees up to an affinity with his Maker; it is a power that may

bring him by degrees down to the level even of Satanic evil. Increased mental power will be the result of this plan—possibly that power will be devoted to bad purposes in many instances ; it may become what it is not meant to be, the engine of some political party. Grant this. But are we to abstain from the granting of this power because of the possibility of its being turned to evil? Why, on that principle no good could be done at all. Good in this world cannot be done without evil. Evil is but the shadow that inseparably accompanies good. You may have a world without shadow ; but it must be a world without light, a mere dim, twilight world. If you would deepen the intensity of the light, you must be content to bring into deeper blackness, and more distinct and definite outline, the shade that accompanies it. He that feels timid at the spectral form of evil is not the man to spread light. There is but one distinct rule that we can lay down for ourselves, and that is, to do the good that lies before us, and to leave the evil which is beyond our control to take care of itself.

In this world the tares and the wheat grow together, and all we have to do is to sow the wheat. If you will increase the rate of travelling, the result will be an increase in the number of accidents and deaths ; if you will have the printing press, you must give to wickedness an illimitable power of multiplying itself. If you will give Christianity to the world, He who knew what His own religion was, distinctly foresaw, and yet foreseeing, did not hesitate to do His work, that in giving to the world inward peace, it would bring with it the outward sword, and pour into the cup of human hatred, already brimming over, fresh elements of discord, religious bitterness, and theological asperity. Our path is clear. Possibilities of bad consequences must not stand in the way of

this work. I see one thing clearly—the labouring men in this town have a right to their reading-room and library, just as much as the higher classes have a right to their clubs, and the middle classes to their Athenæums. Let no cowardly suspicion deter from generous sympathy. Give them their rights. Let the future take care of itself.

The other suggestion is this. Let not a public benefit become a domestic evil. In the upper classes it has been complained that the club has been the destruction of domestic comfort. It is easy for a man who has a few hundreds a year, by means of combination, to live at the rate of thousands. He may have his liveried servants, his splendid hall, his sumptuous entertainments—and for this he may desert his home. The same may be one of the results of this plan of yours. But if a man wants an excuse to stay away from home, he will find it, whether this Institute exists or not. Moreover, it is not a comfortable, happy home that men will leave, but a home made wretched by a wife's slatternly conduct, the absence of cleanliness, the want of that cheerful affectionate greeting which a man has a right to expect when he returns harassed and half maddened from the exhaustion of his daily work. Therefore, let there be a generous rivalry between your wives and daughters and this Institute. I tell them they have got now a rival. Let them try which has most attractions—a comfortable reading-room or a happy home.

I turn next to the spirit in which your undertaking has been carried on. I find in it two things, independence and generous reliance. You might have had an institution on a different principle. It is conceivable that some wealthy philanthropist might have provided you all this at his own cost. You might have had a finer room, more brilliant lights,

a better furnished library ; but every man who entered that room would have felt his independence destroyed. He would have felt a kind of mental pauperism, getting his intellectual food at another's expense ; and there is nothing that destroys all manhood so effectually as dependence upon the patronage of others. Now you have been independent. You have said, "We are men ; we are not children ; we will educate ourselves—it is our own duty." You have brought to bear the principle of combination. The subscription of one penny a week would go a very little way for one man. But a penny a week from 1,000 men amounts to more than 200*l.* at the end of a year. Enough, with a little assistance, for all you want. You have cleansed the building, washed it, papered it, furnished it, all with your own hands. Every man among you by this will, in the first place, feel independent ; in the second place, he will have that elevation of character which arises from the feeling of property. Property calls out all the virtues of forethought, care, respect. The books, the furniture, all are yours. The sense of honest property in them will ensure that they shall be taken care of.

Long may this spirit be characteristic of English working men. We can understand and honour the feelings of that man who stands before us with a modest feeling of his own dignity in his countenance, which seems to say, "The shoes that I wear are clouted, but I paid for the mending of them myself ; the house that I live in is small, but every sixpence of the rent is paid for with my own money. It may be that my clothes are shabby and threadbare ; but no man can say that the begging petition, except in case of the direst necessity, ever went round the town in my name." The greatest on earth has no right to look down on that man.

But not content with this, you have manifested the spirit

of reliance upon others for their goodwill. There is one kind of independence which is akin to high excellence ; another which is akin to restless, jealous pride. The former has been yours. Guarding yourselves against the idea of receiving charity, you have said to those who are better off than yourselves, "We will accept gratefully the books you choose to give us, we will thank you for your sympathy." Now let me say, with all the conviction of my heart, I believe that you have the sympathy of the upper classes. I stand not here to be the special pleader for the rich, or the defender of the vices of those around me. In other places I have spoken, I trust I ever shall speak, in their presence, in no sycophantic tone in the discharge of my duty. But now, in your presence, not for them, but for you to hear, it is but plain truth to say there is a deep feeling for you amongst them.

In these latter times a convulsion has shaken Europe, before which many a strong man's house built upon the sand has gone down. There has been a sifting of the nations ; and everything that had not the basis of reality to rest on has been shattered into shivers. Through all that terrible trial our own country has stood secure. The waves of revolution that thundered on distant shores were only a feeble murmur here. The reason, politically speaking, of the difference is, that the upper classes in this country have hitherto been the leaders in reform.

There are two ways in which alteration may be effected. If it be done gradually from above, it is a reformation ; if suddenly from below, it is a revolution. If the higher do the work God has given them to do, of elevating those below, you have a country working out her own national life securely ; if, on the other hand, those below either tear down wantonly, or by the selfishness and blindness of those above are

compelled to tear down such as are socially their superiors, then there comes a crisis which no country ever yet has passed through without verging upon ruin.

England's reforms hitherto have begun from above. There was a time when the barons of this country, sword in hand, wrung from the most profligate of our monarchs the Great Charter of English liberties. That Charter imparted a portion of the freedom it won to the boroughs and the tenants, mediately and immediately holding from the Crown. When the insincere Charles I. came to the throne, who stood foremost in the resistance to the exaction of ship-money? An English gentleman by the side of an English peer. When his infatuated successor, with the blind arbitrariness of his race, untaught by all experience, began that system which ended in the expulsion of his family, the blood of freedom which flowed upon the scaffold was the blood of an English nobleman. When that great measure passed which gave so large an extension of the franchise, it was proposed by a nobleman in his place, with a voice choked with emotion, produced by the magnitude of the change he was effecting.

Come down to our own times. Who have busied themselves in insuring for the labouring man better ventilation, personal and domestic cleanliness? Who are they that, session after session, fought the battle of the working man to abridge his hours of labour? Who, after long and patient investigation, brought before the country the hideous particulars of women labouring harnessed in the mines, and children young in years but grey-headed in depravity? A band of English gentlemen, at the head of whom was one who has surrounded the name of Ashley with a glory, in comparison with which the concentrated lustre of all the

coronets and crowns in Europe is a tinselled gewgaw, and which will burn brightly when they have passed into nothingness.

Another instance still. Suffer me to remind you of the history of your own Institute. At the beginning of this year a person of this town, afflicted with a severe malady, fixed his thoughts on this question, how he should do good to the working classes of Brighton. You may understand much of a man's real interest in a subject by observing the direction that his thoughts take when they are left to act spontaneously. A man who forces himself to think upon a generous topic does well ; but a man whose thoughts turn to it of their own accord, when all coercion is taken off, loves that cause in reality. It was my privilege to visit this person during his illness, in my pastoral capacity, as a member of my own congregation. I found one thought uppermost in his mind, "How shall I do good to the working classes?" And that which was at first merely dim and vague, took form and shape at last. It grew till it became a living thing ; and whatever interest there may be in the crowded room now before us, whatever may be the result of this movement in your own intellectual elevation, whatever may be the future effects of it upon the minds of the men of Brighton, is all owing to the energy of one Christian philanthropist, who excogitated his idea in the midst of solitude, and matured it in torture. And that man is of a class above your own.

You have asked for sympathy. I say that you have it. I say not that the higher classes of this country have altogether understood the high destinies which they are called on to fulfil. I say not that they all, or any of them, do what they might. To say that would be to say what has been true of no country. There *are* nobles who see in their

rank nothing of a higher call than that which gives them a miserable leadership in the world of fashion. There *are* land-owners who see in the possession of their land nothing more divine than the means of wringing rents from their tenants, and furnishing covert for their game. There *are* wealthy persons who speak of the workman as if he were of a different order of beings from themselves. The day is fast coming when they will find that their whole life has been a lie. After that the longer night is near, which will shroud all such in the darkness of all good men's scorn. But it is false to history—false to experience—false to fact, to give this as the general description of the upper classes of this country.

We pass to the last thing on which I have to speak to you. There is an expression in this paper of a hope "bright in the hearts of the labouring men that better times are coming." The heart of every one responds to that. Who can look on this entangled web of human affairs in which evil struggles with good, good gradually and slowly disengaging itself, without having a hope within him that there are better times to come? Who can see this evil world full of envy and injustice, and be content to believe that things will remain as they are, even to the end? Who can see the brilliancy of character already attained by individuals of our race, without feeling that there is a pledge in this that what has been done already in the individual will yet be accomplished in the nation and in the race?

If I did not respond with all my soul to that, I would close the Bible to-morrow. For from first to last the Bible tells of better times. It came to our first parents and spoke of the serpent Evil crushed, not without suffering, under the foot of man. It came to the Israelite, mourning under political degradation, and consoled him by the vision of a

time in which kings shall reign in righteousness and princes shall rule in judgment. It came to true, brave men, who groaned over the hollowness and hypocrisy of all around them, the false glare and brilliancy which surrounded the great bad man, and told of the day when the vile man should be no longer called liberal, nor the churl bounteous. It spoke in the clearer language of New Testament promise of this actual world becoming a kingdom of peace and purity, of justice, brotherhood, and liberty. It irradiated the last moments of the first martyr with a vision of the Just One at the right hand of power.

Now suffer me to interpret for you the expression of "better times." If I understand you, you do not mean by "better times," times in which there shall be a general scramble for property; you do not mean the time when there shall be obliteration of all distinctions, no degradations for the worthless, no prizes for the best. You do not expect a time in which government shall so interfere to regulate labour that the idle and the industrious workman shall be placed upon a par, and that the man who is able to think out by his brain the thought which is true and beautiful shall not be able to rise above the man who is scarcely above the level of the brute. Those would not be better times. They would be the return of the bad old times of false coercion and brute force.

But if I understand you aright, you expect a time when *merit shall find its level*; when all falsehoods and hypocrisies shall be consigned to contempt, and all imbecility degraded and deposed; when worth shall receive its true meaning, when it shall be interpreted by what a man is and not by what he has, nor by what his relations have been. You want the restitution of all things to reality. Those are better times.

Now, then, let us look at our England. Has she any part in these better times? They tell us that England's day is past. I have heard foreign philosophers dissect our political state, and, with cold-blooded triumph, by all the precedents of the past, anticipate our approaching fall. It may be so. In the history of the past, in the relics and ruins around us, there are the solemn monuments of nations once great that are now nothing. The land of the Pharaohs is in decay; its population is now diminishing, and the sand of the desert daily silting up the temples of her former magnificence: Rome is broken into fragments: Jerusalem's last sob is hushed. Spain once had an empire on which the sun never set, because the moment he set on her possessions in the east, he rose on her possessions in the west. Spain lies now in her hopeless struggle, like the blackened hull of a vessel that has been lightning-struck, rolling and heaving helplessly as the ocean wills. Genoa, Venice, Holland, once had an eastern traffic. Upon them the same law of decay has passed, and the weed rots on the side of palaces that are now the abode of paupers.

It may be that such a destiny is in store for England. But one thing is certain, that the decay of morals in all these cases preceded the decay of institutions. The inward ruin preceded the political. So long as there was inward strength of constitution, so long intestine commotions were thrown off easily to the surface; so long as the nation was united in itself, so long were the attacks of enemies thrown off, like the waves from the rock. To borrow a Scripture metaphor, if there was heard in the political heavens of a devoted nation or a devoted city the shrill shriek of the judgment eagles plunging for their prey, it was not till moral corruption had reduced the body of the nation to a carcase. Where the

body was, the eagles were gathered together. Looking to our beloved country, we see nothing of that kind. Her moral character seems yet sound. Healthy feeling is among us.

A few weeks ago I stood in the lower room of this building, anxious to be a witness of the spirit in which you were conducting your undertaking. The speakers that evening, with one or two exceptions, were all working men. I heard, not eloquence, but something far better—straightforward, honest, English manly common sense. A high moral tone pervaded all that was said. I heard vice decried. I heard lounging, drinking, smoking, all the evils that ruin the health and character of the artizan, sternly condemned. I trust that it did my heart good. And I hesitate not to say that I left that room with feelings enlarged in sympathy. I trod through the dark streets that evening with a more elastic step, and a lighter heart; I felt a distincter hope for this country—I felt proud of belonging to a nation whose labouring men could hold such a tone as that.

Through all England we see the same thing: increasing moral earnestness, a deeper purpose, a more fixed resolve. Even in our justice do we see the same healthy tone. Justice is no longer the weak, passionate outbreak of vindictive feeling against a criminal for the injury he has done; in the very moment of her worst insult England can hold the sword suspended, and refuse to strike until she has maturely weighed not only what is due to the majesty of offended law, but besides, how much to the frailty of an erring judgment.

A striking exhibition of that same tone we have in the character of our press. On the whole the press is on the side of rectitude. There is a paper familiar to us all, which is the representative of English humour. It is dedicated to

mirth and jollity; but it is a significant feature of our times, and I believe a new one, that the comic satire of a country, expressed in a periodical, which tests a country's feeling because of its universal circulation, should be, on the whole, on the side of right. It takes the side of the oppressed; it is never bitter except against what at least seems unjust and insincere. It is rigidly correct in purity, distinctly saying in all this that England even in her hour of mirth is resolved to permit no encroachment on her moral tone.

Looking at all this, and seeing in the upper classes and the lower, one strong feeling, one conviction that we have been too long two nations, one determination to become one, to burst the barriers that have kept us apart so long; looking at the exhibitions of high self-forgetfulness and sworn devotedness to duty, which from time to time are rising even out of the most luxurious and most voluptuous ranks, we have a right to hope that that which is working among us is not death, but life.

Our national character is showing itself again in its ancient form, that strange character, so calm, so cold, so reserved outwardly, rising once again in its silent strength. The heart of England is waking to her work, that mighty heart which is so hard to rouse to strong emotion, but the pulses of which, when once roused, are like the ocean in its strength, sweeping all before it. This is not death. This is not decay. The sun of England's glory has not set. There is a bright, long day before her yet. There are better times coming.

AN ADDRESS

Delivered to the Members of the Working Men's Institute, at the Town Hall, Brighton, on Thursday, April 18th, 1850, on the Question of the Introduction of Sceptical Publications into their Library.



INTRODUCTORY.

AS this pamphlet may fall into the hands of some who are unacquainted with the circumstances which gave rise to its publication, and as some principles are involved in it which have a wider range than belongs to a local Institution, it may be well to preface it with so much information as may render it intelligible.

The Working Men's Institute was established in October, 1848. It was the belief of those who originated it, that a

large class of persons were almost entirely destitute of any means of self-education by access to a library or periodical publications—a class still more limited in means than those for whom Athenæums and Mechanics' Institutes had been long established. A very small subscription, one penny a week, if only sufficient numbers would combine, was found to be large enough to provide such an Association with the materials of mental and moral improvement; and it was confidently hoped that subscriptions from the wealthier classes would enable them, by degrees, to accumulate a valuable library. Great eagerness was manifested by the working classes when this project was made known. About 1,300 members enrolled themselves at once. The peculiar feature of the Association was, that the whole management virtually devolved upon this class alone, with the exception of one of a rank above them, the late Mr. Holtham, who gave up a large portion of his time to assisting in the organization of the Society; the object of this being to break down, if possible, that feeling of suspicion which exists in the minds of so many of the working class, of a desire for interference and coercion on the part of those who come forward as their benefactors.

It was, of course, foreseen that the rock on which such a plan might be wrecked, would be any successful effort to divert the funds and machinery of the Institute from its original intention to the purposes of a political party.

But in this case, the withdrawal of all well-disposed persons would leave the Association to dwindle till it became extinct. For its very existence depended upon numbers. The experiment, therefore, appeared to be a perfectly safe one, inasmuch as perversion of its purposes must inevitably be followed quickly by annihilation.

One fatal oversight (such at least it appears to the author of these pages) in the constitution of the Society realised the foreseen danger. It had been justly held that the working men ought to have in their own hands the management of their own Society, lest the smallest suspicion should arise that there was any desire in those who were their benefactors to coerce or trammel them. Every attempt at interference was scrupulously avoided. All this was wise and just. But beyond this, not only was the domination of the upper classes made impossible, but even their assistance and advice excluded, by making honorary members incompetent to vote or act on committee ; a mistake which originated in an over scrupulous generosity on the part of one who suggested it ; but fatal, because false in principle.

To have vested the power of unlimited control or rule in the richer classes, would have been a surrender of the very principle on which the plan rested. But to reject all co-operation and assistance from them, to receive their contributions and refuse their advice, was to create and foster a spirit, not of manly, but of jealous independence, and to produce in a new form that vicious state of relationship between class and class, which is at this day the worst evil in our social life—the repulsion of the classes of society from each other at all points except one, so as to leave them touching at the single point of pecuniary interest. And thus the cementing principle of society is declared to be the spirit of selfishness—the only spirit which is essentially destructive. A fatal blunder !

When it is reckoned the duty of one class to give money, and the duty of another to suspect motives, the cordial sympathy of classes which really depend on one another cannot long continue. Not by mutual independence, but by mutual and trustful dependence, can men live

together and society exist. As might have been expected, contributions fell off, and the more active and turbulent, unbalanced by a salutary check, became leaders in the Society.

An attempt was made by a numerous minority to introduce into the library works of sceptical and socialist principles. The Secretary, Mr. Bessant, resisted the attempt. A general meeting of the members was dissolved without coming to a decision. In this emergency the following Address was made, with the intention of meeting that attempt, if possible, by a candid and pacific examination of the principles of the question.

BROTHER MEN, MEMBERS OF THE WORKING MEN'S
INSTITUTE,—

TWO years have passed since I addressed you in this place. On that occasion I was here by your invitation : on the present, you are here by mine. I have to explain the unprecedented step of summoning you to meet me here this evening. My account of it is this : I am personally compromised before the public by your proceedings. Unexpectedly on my part, you honoured me with a request that I would deliver the opening address to your Society. It was at a period when events which had recently taken place upon the Continent caused every large movement to be looked upon with suspicious eyes : yet I did not think it right to hesitate for one moment in complying with your request. Such influence as my name could command, I gladly gave you. I have not the vanity

to say that that influence was great, or that my name had weight with many: but it did weigh with some; and support was given you by them in reliance upon my representations. To them, and to the public generally, I stand pledged for the character of your Society. For good or evil, my name is inseparably linked with yours. Your success is my success, and your failure is my shame. This is my claim to be heard, or rather the ground on which rests my duty to address you; and I ask your calm attention, not promising that every word I say will be acceptable to all; but I think I may promise, that not a word shall drop from me, which on mature reflection you will be able justly to call illiberal.

It may require, too, to be explained why this address is a public one, instead of being confined to the members of the Institute. Great publicity has been given to your late meetings by your own hand-bills, and by the press. I cannot disguise from you the fact, that much pain has been felt in Brighton in consequence of those proceedings. I cannot hide from you that much attention has been directed towards you, and that our meeting of this evening is looked to with great anxiety. I cannot conceal from you, that sympathy has been much chilled, that the cause of the education of the working classes has received a shock, and that the question of the desirableness of free institutions has become a matter with many of serious doubt. Therefore, as the scandal was public, I felt that the vindication must be public too. You asked me to stand by you at the hopeful beginning of your Institution—I could not desert you in the moment of danger, and the hour of your unpopularity. I am here once more to say publicly, that whatever errors there may have been in the working out of the details, I

remain unaltered in the conviction that the broad principle on which your Society commenced was a true one. I am here to identify myself in public again with you—to say that your cause is my cause, and your failure my failure. I am here to profess my unabated trust in the sound-heartedness and right feeling of the great majority of the working men of the Brighton Institute.

One more thing remains to be accounted for. You will ask me why this meeting differs in form so evidently from your usual meetings. The chairman is not your president, not your vice-president, not even a member of your Society. This is my reason. I am here to-night in a position quite peculiar ; a position of peculiar delicacy, difficulty, and independence. I am not the organ or spokesman of any party. I do not mix myself with any of the personalities of the question. I have taken counsel of no one of either party ; nor, indeed, have I asked any one's advice upon the matter. I am anxious that neither the president, nor any section of the Institute should be pledged to my views. I asked no one to share the responsibility of summoning this meeting, or that of its result. Let all the blame, if blame there be, rest on me. On my single responsibility, all is done. To make this evident to the public, with the entire and friendly concurrence of your president, Mr. Ricardo, I asked one to preside over us to-night, whose firmness, impartiality, and uprightness, are so well known to his fellow-townsmen, as to determine beforehand what the tone and character of this meeting are to be. This is not a lecture, but an address.

It is painful to be obliged to say anything of self ; yet, for several reasons, I feel compelled to say a few words respecting the spirit in which I desire to address you.

I do not pretend to dictate, nor shall I assume the tone

of insulting condescension. I know that many whom I address to-night, have minds of a strength and hardness originally greater than mine, though my advantages of education may have been superior. I am not about to try the power of priestcraft, nor to cajole or flatter you into the reception of my views. Let the working men dismiss from their minds the idea, if it exists, of any assumption of a liberal tone for the purpose of winning them. If I speak sentiments free and liberal, it is not because they are adopted as opinions, but because they are bound up with every fibre of my being. I could as soon part with my nature and being, as cease to think and speak freely. Let them not fancy that such language is assumed, as fit for a platform before which *they* stand. There are those of your own number who will tell you that, in another place, from my own pulpit, not before workmen, but before their masters, before the rich and titled of this country, I have held and hold this same tone, and taught Christianity as the perfect Law of Liberty. They can tell you that it has cost me something, and that I have brought upon myself in consequence no small share of suspicion, misrepresentation, and personal dislike. I do not say this in bitterness; I hold it to be a duty to be liberal and generous, even to the illiberal and narrow-minded; and it seems to me a pitiful thing for any man to aspire to be true and to speak truth, and then to complain in astonishment, that truth has not crowns to give, but thorns; but I say it in order that you and I may understand each other. Let the men of this Association rest assured that they shall hear no cant from me. I am not before them even to preach the Gospel, but to meet them on broad common ground, to speak to them as a man addressing his brother men.

Again, my purpose to-night is not denunciation. If any man has come expecting to hear Socialism and Infidelity denounced, he will be disappointed. My firm conviction is, that denunciation does no good. Anathemas, whether thundered from church courts, from pulpits, or from platforms, are foolish and impotent. It is the principle of that Book, the spirit of which I desire for my guide throughout life, that the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.

Let me explain why I refuse to denounce Infidelity.

I refuse to do so to-night because it would be ungenerous. You have heard of a place called "Coward's Castle." Coward's Castle is that pulpit or that platform from which a man, surrounded by his friends, in the absence of his opponents, secure of applause and safe from a reply, denounces those who differ from him. I mean to invite no discussion to-night; and just because there can be no reply, if there were no better reason than that, there shall be no denunciation.

Your chairman has already told you that there is to be no debate; and I will explain to you why I have resolved on this. All topics are the fit subjects of free inquiry; but all are not the fit subjects of public discussion. And this not because of any weakness in them, or uncertainty respecting their truth; but because of the very delicacy of the matter in question. There are some things too delicate and too sacred to be handled rudely without injury to truth. Nothing is more certain than the duty of filial love; but if it were made a question for discussion in a school debating club, I fancy the arrival at truth would be somewhat questionable.

Exactly in proportion as a boy was good, tender, and affectionate, would he feel it difficult, rhetorically or logically,

to defend his feelings ; he would be conscious of a stammering tongue, and a crimsoned cheek, and perhaps be overwhelmed with confusion. Nor would it require much talent or wit to make his position seem absurd—it would only require a copious flow of ribaldry. For you know the old proverb, that between the sublime and the ridiculous there is but a single step : and the more sacred a subject is, the more easy is it to give it an absurd aspect. It would be in the power of any bad boy to raise a laugh at the expense of one better and more manly than himself, by representing him as under the guidance of his mother's apron string. In the very same way it would be easy enough to reduce the position of a religious man to one exquisitely ludicrous ; loud, rude taunts of spiritual subjection, timidity, support by leading strings, pointed with blasphemy and unscrupulous effrontery, would not demand much superiority of talent, but would effectually cover all chance of arriving at the truth with a cloud of dust. Therefore do I refuse to permit discussion this evening respecting the love which a Christian man bears to his Redeemer—a love more delicate far than the love which was ever borne to sister, or the adoration with which he regards his God, a reverence more sacred than man ever bore to mother. Therefore do I reject the infinite absurdity of a trial of such truth as the existence of a God by a show of hands.

Again, there shall be no denunciation, because infidelity is the vaguest of all charges. None is more freely, or more wantonly, or more cruelly hurled by man against man. Infidelity is often only, the unmeaning accusation brought by timid persons, half conscious of the instability of their own belief, and furious against every one whose words make them tremble at their own insecurity. It is sometimes the cry of

narrowness against an old truth under a new and more spiritual form. Sometimes it is the charge caught up at second-hand, and repeated as a kind of religious hue and cry, in profoundest ignorance of the opinions that are so characterised. Nothing is more melancholy than to listen to the wild, indiscriminate charges of Scepticism, Mysticism, Pantheism, Rationalism, Atheism, which are made by some of the weakest of mankind, who scarcely know the difference between Mesmerism and Mysticism. I hold it a Christian duty to abstain from this foolish and wicked system of labelling men with names; to stand aloof from every mob, religious or irreligious in name, which resembles that mob at Ephesus, who shouted for two long hours, the more part knowing not wherefore they were come together.

When the most spiritual minds of the sixteenth century protested against Rome, Protestantism was called infidelity. Eighteen centuries ago, the Christians were burned at the stake under the name of Atheists. The Athenians poisoned their noblest man as an Atheist. Only a few weeks ago, I saw one of the most precious works of one of the wisest of the Christian philosophers of England—Samuel Taylor Coleridge—denounced as the most pestilential work of our day, by one of those miserable publications, miscalled religious newspapers, whose unhallowed work it seems to be on earth to point out to its votaries whom they ought to suspect instead of whom they ought to love, and to sow the seeds of dissension, malice, hatred, and all uncharitableness. Nay, I cannot but remember that, in bygone years, One whose whole life was one continued prayer, the sum and substance of whose teaching was love to God and love to man, was crucified by the bigots of His day as a Sabbath-breaker, a Blasphemer, and a Revolutionist.

Therefore I refuse to thunder out indiscriminate anathemas to-night. Real infidelity is a fearful thing, but I have learned to hold the mere *charge* of infidelity very cheap. And I earnestly would impress on all, the duty of being cautious in the use of these charges. Give a man the name of Atheist, hint that he is verging upon infidelity, and the man is doomed ; doomed as surely as the wretched animal which is pursued by the hue and cry of bad boys, and which, driven from street to street, maddened by the ceaseless rattle of the tin appended to him, expires at last, gasping, furious, amidst the shrieks of old women, and the stones of terrified passengers, who are all the more savage in proportion to their terror. For cowardice is always cruel.

Again, I abstain from denunciation, because, not unfrequently, even that which professes to be infidelity, is disbelief, not of God, but of the character which men have given of God ; opposition to the name of Christ, but not to the spirit of Christ ; hatred rather of the portrait by which His followers have represented Him. I believe we should never forget, that if infidelity be rife in this country, we who profess to be servants of God have much to answer for. Our bitterness, and superstition, and rancour, have been the representations of the spirit of Christianity from which men have recoiled. Dare we brand infidelity with hard names, as if we were guiltless ?

Ever the lesson of history has been this—the recoil from formalism is scepticism ; the reaction from superstition is infidelity. In the days of the Pharisees the natural and inevitable recoil was Sadduceeism. In the 15th and 16th centuries, when Christianity itself had become form and magic, the result was the polished infidelity of the Papal Court of the tenth Leo. When Puritanism had bound

men's consciences by a strictness more intolerable than that of Popery itself, substituted a Pharisaism of words for a Pharisaism of ceremonies, regulated the simplicities of human life by a rigorous proscription of all freehearted mirth, and even restricted the dishes on the table to a religious number—the reaction was, the light, sceptical licentiousness of the reign of Charles II.

It is a fact worthy of deep pondering—to me a singularly startling one—that at the moment when we, the priests of England, were debating as a matter of life and death the precise amount of miracle said to be performed in a Christian sacrament, and excommunicating one another with reciprocated charges of heresy, the working men of this country, who are not to be put off with transcendental hypotheses and mysterious phraseology, on whom the burdens of this existence press as fearful realities, were actually debating in *their* societies, here, beneath this very roof, a far more awful question, whether there be indeed a God, or not. It might suggest, to one who thinks, a question not altogether calming in these days, what connection there is between these two things.

There is a special reason for saying all this. Among the list of books proposed by one party amongst you, and rejected by the other, I find "Queen Mab," by Shelley. Now, Shelley's works, if objectionable, are objectionable on a very different ground from that on which many similar works should be condemned. In one sense, Shelley was an infidel; in another sense, he was not an infidel. I could read you passages from "Queen Mab" which every right-minded man would indignantly condemn; and I could read you others breathing a spirit of benevolence, and aspiration, and trust; and purity, which are as sublime as

poetically beautiful. Of the first class, I need scarcely say that I shall produce none ; and of the second class I will only quote one :—

“ For when the power of imparting good
Is equal to the will, the human soul
Requires no other heaven.”

I do not ask for a more spirited or a more just idea of heaven. Compare it with words infallible : “ If we love one another, God dwelleth in us ;” “ It is more blessed to give than to receive.” I would that the anticipated heaven of many who are called Christians were half as much purged of the idea of arbitrary rewards and happified selfishness.

I could adduce numbers of such passages. The poem is full of them, steeped in a flood of earnest desire to see this earth regenerated and purified, and the spirit of man mingling with the Infinite Spirit of Good.

How comes it, then, that one whose works breathe so much of the spirit of Christianity could blaspheme Christ ? Alas ! Christ had been miserably shown to Shelley. Poor, poor Shelley ! All that he knew of Christianity was as a system of exclusion and bitterness, which was to drive him from his country ; all that he knew of the God of the Bible was the picture of a bloody tyrant, gloating in blood, and making his horrible decree the measure of right and wrong, instead of right and wrong the ground of his decree. I say, God had been so represented to Shelley ; and if it be replied, “ Shelley might have read his Bible to find that this was false,” I reply, that chapter and verse were quoted by those who were supposed to know their Bible in corroboration of their theories, and Shelley could not have read

those passages but with preconceptions of their meaning. I grieve that I cannot call Shelley a Christian.

There are frantic ravings in this book which no Christian can justify; wild, vague music, as of an Æolian harp, inarticulate and unmeaning, breathed as a hymn to the Spirit of Nature, Intellectual Beauty, and so forth; maddest schemes and fastidious sensitivenesses respecting marriage and man's granivorous nature; a fibre of insanity in his brain; yet I cannot help feeling that there was a spirit in poor Shelley's mind, which might have assimilated with the Spirit of his Redeemer—nay, which I will dare to say was kindred with that Spirit, if only his Redeemer had been differently imaged to him. Let who will denounce Shelley, I will not. I will not brand with Atheism the name of one whose life was one dream of enthusiastic, however impracticable, philanthropy. I will not say that a man who, by his opposition to God, means opposition to a demon, to whom the name of God in his mind is appended, is an enemy of God. To such a man I only reply, You are blaspheming a devil. That is not the God I adore. You are not my enemy. Change the *name*, and I will bid that *character* defiance with you.

Once more, I do not denounce, because the state of Atheism is too miserable for me to curse it. There is an infidelity with which no good man should have any sympathy. There are infidels who are such, knowing what they oppose. There are men who, in no mistake, know the difference between good and evil, and distinctly knowing it, choose the evil and reject the good. But there is a state *called* infidelity, which deserves compassion rather than indignation—the dreadful state of one who craves light and cannot find it. I do think the way we treat that state, is most unpardonably cruel.

It is an awful moment when the soul begins to find that the props on which it has blindly rested so long, are, many of them, rotten, and begins to suspect them all ; when it begins to feel the nothingness of many of the traditional opinions which have been received with implicit confidence, and in that horrible insecurity begins also to doubt whether there be anything to believe at all. It is an awful hour—let him who has passed through it say how awful—when this life has lost its meaning, and seems shrivelled into a span : when the grave appears to be the end of all, human goodness nothing but a name, and the sky above this universe a dead expanse, black with the void from which God himself has disappeared. In that fearful loneliness of spirit, when those who should have been his friends and counsellors only frown upon his misgivings, and profanely bid him stifle doubts, which, for aught he knows, may arise from the fountain of truth itself, to extinguish, as a glare from hell, that which, for aught he knows, may be light from Heaven, and everything seems wrapped in hideous uncertainty, I know but one way in which a man may come forth from his agony scatheless ; it is by holding fast to those things which are certain still—the grand, simple landmarks of morality.

In the darkest hour through which a human soul can pass, whatever else is doubtful, this at least is certain. If there be no God and no future state, yet, even then, it is better to be generous than selfish, better to be chaste than licentious, better to be true than false, better to be brave than to be a coward. Blessed beyond all earthly blessedness is the man who, in the tempestuous darkness of the soul, has dared to hold fast to these venerable landmarks. Thrice blessed is he, who, when all is drear and cheerless within

and without, when his teachers terrify him, and his friends shrink from him, has obstinately clung to moral good. Thrice blessed, because *his* night shall pass into clear, bright day.

I appeal to the recollection of any man who has passed through that hour of agony, and stood upon the rock at last, the surges still below him, and the last cloud drifted from the sky above, with a faith, and hope, and trust no longer traditional, but of his own, a trust which neither earth nor hell shall shake thenceforth for ever. But it is not in this way generally that men act who are tempted by doubt. Generally, the step from doubt is a reckless plunge into sensuality. Then comes the darkening of the moral being; and then from uncertainty and scepticism it may be that the path lies unobstructed, sheer down into Atheism. But if there be one on earth who deserves compassion, it is the sincere, earnest, and—may I say it without risk of being misunderstood?—honest doubter. Let who will denounce him, I will not. I would stand by his side, and say, Courage, my brother! You are darkening your own soul; you are contradicting the meaning of your own existence. But God is your Father, and an Infinite Spirit seeks to mingle itself with yours.

I pass to the immediate question which has brought us together this evening.

The history of recent events is briefly this. About a fortnight ago certain books were introduced, or attempted to be introduced, into this Institution. They were objected to—I must say, rightly objected to—by a large majority of the members of the Institution. Out of a Society of 800 or 900 members, only 138 could be found to publicly advocate their reception. Now, in order to treat this matter fairly, I believe that the best way will be to endeavour to

consider, what are the principles on which their introduction is urged. Looking over these papers which have come before the public, I think I discern three grounds on which their proposal is defended ; the Rights of Free Inquiry ; the Rights of Liberty ; and the Rights of Democracy. I am content to argue the question on those three grounds.

Let us first consider the Rights of Free Inquiry. It is said, and with some degree of truth, that the reason of man is the supreme judge of all things, and that God's existence cannot be demonstrated to reason. I am quite ready to admit that, provided that we can first agree respecting the word "Reason." Very often a dispute arises from a mistake concerning words. In English, the word "Reason" has two meanings, and I do not know that I can find any two words that are exactly adapted to express those two meanings, which are included in one and the same word. But we will express them in this way. There is a Soul and there is a Mind ; the Soul or Heart is different from the Mind, and the Reason is different from the Understanding.* The understanding is that by which a man becomes a mere logician and a mere rhetorician ; it is simply that by which he reasons from the impressions received through the senses. There is an understanding in the beaver, and there is an understanding in the bee, by which it builds its habitation. The fox has it as well, and there we call it cunning. They can and do reason ; but they have not Reason. There you see the ambiguity, the two meanings of the word. It is by this Understanding that man knows what is profitable and what is unprofitable for him, by which he can shape his life

* It is scarcely needful to remark, that this use of the two words in a special and technical sense, to denote a most important distinction between two things essentially different, is borrowed from Mr. Coleridge.

with prudence. If you mean, in using the word Reason, to say that Understanding cannot find out God, I am ready to agree with you.

There is an expression imputed to one of the members of the Working Men's Institute, which has been since denied; but it matters little whether it was rightly or mistakenly denied by the committee; it is this—that “if a man undertakes to prove the being of a God, he undertakes to prove too much.” I know not whether he said it or not. If he did not say it, I will say it for him. I cannot *prove* the being of a God; if by proof, I mean that addressed to the Understanding. If I said I could, I should be guilty of the vilest Rationalism.

I cannot *prove* any one of the highest truths except to the Heart, the Soul, the Reason. I cannot prove to any man that sweet is better than sour. I cannot prove that good is better than evil to any man, unless there is a correspondence in his own being to the eternal difference between them. I cannot prove to any man that there is a sun, unless he has an eye to see it. I cannot prove that he is in a waking state, if he is in an illusion that he is in a dream. For even the proof I give, the impression my hand makes on his, is not that disputable? May not that proof be part of his dream? Has he not before now dreamed that he was awake? The fact is, that there are truths of sense addressed to the Understanding; there are others, and they the highest, which are addressed to the Reason. I will undertake to convict a man of idiocy, if he cannot see the proof that three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles. I will undertake to prove him fit for a lunatic asylum, if he refuses to receive the evidence that the earth goes round the sun.

But if I place before a man an argument resting on miracles or on prophecy, or the proof from design, or any of the

proofs addressed to the understanding, he may be neither an idiot nor insane, and yet unable to feel its force. An old French proverb says, that "grand thoughts come from the heart." God must be felt by the Heart, intuitively perceived by the Reason, before He can be demonstrated to the Understanding. If a man does not feel in every fibre of his heart a Divine Presence, I cannot prove that it is there, or anywhere else. For the evidence of the Senses can never be more certain than the convictions of the Soul or Reason.

There are men always talking of rights, and never of duties ; I do not expect that they should believe in God, nor could I prove God to such. But let a man once feel the law of duty in his soul—let him feel within him as with the articulate distinctness of a living Voice, the Absolute Imperative, "Thou shalt," and "Thou shalt not"—let him feel that the only hell is the hell of doing wrong, and if that man does not believe in God, all history is false. Brother men, the man who tries to discover a God outside of him, instead of within, is doing just like him who endeavours to find out the place of the rainbow by hunting for it. The place of the rainbow depends upon your standing point ; and I say that the conviction of the being and character of a God depends upon your moral standing point. To believe in God, is simply the most difficult thing in the world. You must be pure before you can believe in purity ; generous, before you can believe in unselfishness. In all moral truth, what you are, that is the condition of your belief. Only to him in whom infinite aspirations stir, can an Infinite One be proved.

Now once more we will try this on the principle of Free Inquiry. I find, on reading over the papers issued by the committee and their opponents, that one party objects to the

refusal to admit these books, on the ground that it is an attempt to crush free inquiry. Well, let there be free inquiry : let there be no attempt to stop free inquiry. There is no censorship of the press. We desire none. I would not, for 100,000*l.* an hour, that there should be any restrictions placed on the publishing of books. I would far rather that there was much less of censorship of opinion. I know that millions of books, infidel and bad books, swarm out of the press ; and yet I would not wish to see them stopped by force, except, of course, such as are shocking to public decency. Great as are the evils of unchecked license in publishing and reading, the evil of permitting any person or persons to restrict either authoritatively, would be immeasurably greater.

It is a part of the liberty of the country, part of the freedom we enjoy, part of the very peace and purity we have, that all these things are permitted to be matters of free inquiry. It is part of our moral discipline. I would not have that exotic virtue which is kept from the chill blast, hidden from evil, without any permission to be exposed to temptation. That alone is virtue which has good placed before it and evil, and seeing the evil, chooses the good.*

But now, this loud cry about the bigotry of stopping free inquiry, let us consider it. What do the objectors to these books say ? Inquire if you will ; only inquire at home. If you will read books of socialism or infidelity, read them at home, do not bring them into our Institution. Do not compel the Working Men's Institute to endorse these books

* See the well-known passage in Milton's noble work, the "*Areopagitica*," which was unconsciously in the mind when these words were spoken.

of yours with its approbation. Is this bigotry? Is this an attempt to stop free inquiry?

Now let us try the matter on the principle of Freedom. It seems to me that false notions respecting liberty are strangely common. People talk of liberty as if it meant the liberty of doing what a man *likes*. The only liberty that a man worthy the name of a man ought to ask for, is to have all restrictions, inward and outward, removed, which prevent his doing what he *ought*. I call that man free, who is master of his lower appetites, who is able to rule himself. I call him free, who has his flesh in subjection to his spirit; who fears doing wrong, but who fears neither man nor devil besides. I think that man free, who has learned the most blessed of all truths, that liberty consists in obedience to the power and to the will and to the law that his higher soul reverences and approves. He is not free because he does what he likes, for in his better moments his soul protests against the act, and rejects the authority of the passion which commanded him, as an usurping force, and tyranny. He feels that he is a slave to his own unhallowed passions. But he is free when he does what he ought, because there is no protest in his soul against that submission.

Some people seem to think that there is no liberty in obedience. I tell you there is no liberty *except* in loyal obedience—the obedience of the unconstrained affections. Did you never see a mother kept at home, a kind of prisoner, by her sick child, obeying its every wish and caprice, passing the night sleepless? Will you call the mother a slave? Or is this obedience the obedience of slavery? I call it obedience of the highest liberty, the liberty of love.

We hear in these days a great deal respecting Rights :

the rights of private judgment, the rights of labour, the rights of property, and the rights of man. Rights are grand things, divine things in this world of God's ; but the way in which we expound those rights, alas ! seems to me to be the very incarnation of selfishness. I can see nothing very noble in a man who is for ever going about calling for his own rights. Alas ! alas ! for the man who feels nothing more grand in this wondrous, divine world than his own rights !

Let me tell you a story respecting rights. Three thousand years ago, history tells us of two men, the one a poor man, the other a rich man. The name of the poor man was David, the name of the rich man was Nabal. David had been expelled from his country unjustly, and in that emergency there was nothing left for him but to secure his independence by becoming chieftain over a band of disaffected men, who lived in those rude times irregularly enough, but whose wild proceedings he contrived partially to restrain. There was a custom in that country which gave to every such chieftain a right to levy a kind of compulsory wages, tax, or black mail, upon those shepherds and farmers whose property he had respected and defended from others more unscrupulous. It had grown up by a kind of tacit understanding ; not precisely defined, and liable therefore to considerable abuse and uncertainty. David had made such a claim on Nabal, and Nabal considered it unreasonable, refused to accede to it, and added, besides, words of taunt, those bitter contemptuous words, which the arrogant vulgar can use, who fancy that wealth and birth have entitled them to scorn plebeian claims, words which make the blood boil in men's veins ; whereupon David girded on his sword in fury, and nothing but an abject apology from Nabal's wife

could have prevented an appeal to arms, or, as you call it in these days, an appeal to physical force.

Brother men, these were the Rights of Labour opposed to the Rights of Property. I cannot see anything noble in that. I cannot see anything manly in that ferocious struggle between rich and poor: the one striving to take as much, and the other to keep as much as he can. The cry of "My rights, your duties," I think we might change to something nobler. If we could learn to say, "My duties, your rights," we should come to the same thing in the end; but the spirit would be different. That not very dignified feud between Nabal and David is only a picture of that which, hidden under fine names, men are calling now patriotism, public spirit, political martyrdom, protection, free trade—miserable enough in my mind.

All we are gaining by this cry of "Rights" is the life of the wild beast and of the wild man of the desert, whose hand is against every man, and every man's hand against him. Nay, the very brutes, unless they had an instinct which respects rights even more strongly than it claims them, could never form anything like a community. Did you never observe, in a heronry or rookery, that the new-made nest is left in perfect confidence by the birds that built it? If the others had not learned to respect those private and sacred rights, but began to assert each his right to the sticks which are woven together there, I fancy it would be some time before you could get a heronry or a rookery!

Two thousand years ago there was One here on this earth who lived the grandest life that ever has been lived yet, a life that every thinking man, with deeper or shallower meaning, has agreed to call Divine. I read little respecting His rights or of His claims of rights; but I have read a

great deal respecting His duties. Every act He did He called a duty. I read very little in that life respecting His rights; but I hear a vast deal respecting His wrongs—wrongs infinite—wrongs borne with a majestic, Godlike silence. His reward? His reward was the reward that God gives to all His true and noble ones—to be cast out in His day and generation, and a life-conferring death at last. Those were HIS rights !

This, then, is the way in which we desire to expound Rights : my Rights are, in truth, my Duties ; my Rights are limited by another man's Rights. For example, I have a perfect right to build a wall on my own estate. The language of the law is, that to whomsoever the soil belongs is his all up to the skies. But within three yards of my wall is my neighbour's window. What becomes of the Right that I was talking of? My Right is limited ; it is my duty, because limited by his Right.

You have a right to read your books, and to inquire and to examine for yourselves ; but I put it to you, brother men, have you a right to force into an Institution shared by others books which are to them disgusting? Is that liberty?

There is one other principle on which the present arrangement of your affairs is defended. It is the rights of Democracy. I will now define Democracy. I know not whether the definition will be taken ; but I will give it in the fair, and generous, and candid sense. I believe that in everything held with earnestness by large bodies of men there is a certain amount of truth. Whether I hold democratic views or not, is not the question. I merely endeavour to expound the fair meaning of them. Now, Democracy, if it means anything, means government by the people. It has for its very watchword, Equality of all men. Now,

let us not endeavour to make it ridiculous. I suppose that a sensible democrat does not mean that all individual men are equal in intelligence and worth. He does not mean that the Bushman or the Australian is equal to the Englishman. But he means this, that the original stuff of which all men are made is equal ; that there is no reason why the Hottentot and the Australian may not be cultivated, so that in the lapse of centuries they may be equal to Englishmen.

I suppose the democrat would say, there is no reason why the son of a cobbler should not by education become fit to be the prime minister of the land, or take his place on the bench of judges. And I suppose that all free institutions mean this. I suppose they are meant to assert, Let the people be educated ; let there be a fair field, and no favour ; let every man have a fair chance, and then the happiest condition of a nation would be that, when every man had been educated, morally and intellectually, to his very highest capacity, there should then be selected out of men so trained a Government of the Wisest and the Best.

This is the principle of Democracy. I suppose no man will quarrel with this definition. It appears to me that you have departed from that principle. The principle of Democracy is this, that there is no essential difference between man and man ; no reason why one class should be selected for privileges as, in its nature, necessarily superior to another class. I find in your book of rules a rule which entirely contradicts that ; and it seems to me that it is a suicidal rule. It is this. You have a rule which prevents any one of your honorary—that is, richer—members from having a vote or acting in committee. That is to say, you will neither have a Democracy nor an Aristocracy, but an Oligarchy. Not an open field for worth, nor a government by the best

and wisest, but a government by a specified class. You will not permit the intelligence of others to guide or assist you. You cut yourselves off from all more highly educated minds. You not only say that the working man, intellectually and originally, is on a level with others, but that he is absolutely superior. You deny Equality. You will not permit a free, fair chance for a government of the wisest and best. You say the most ignorant must be the best and wisest. Is that Democracy?

Brother men, I hesitate not to say that, unless that rule be rescinded, and the whole thing be put on a different footing, this Institution is lost. I know that this was done with the concurrence of your late lamented treasurer. It was not a rule which I felt could ever succeed or prosper; but, however, so long as his influence was with you, which you respected and revered, the injury was not felt, because he supplied the place of that intelligence from which you have cut yourselves off. But let that rule remain, live in the spirit of jealousy and suspicion, believe that the upper classes mean you ill, that in the great town of Brighton no man of any rank or wealth above your own can assist you with advice but he must do so from interested motives, and I cannot see how this Institution is to last at all.

I now wish to put before you two or three reasons why it seems to me that, on grounds of fairness, these books ought to be rejected. The first reason is, that they are contrary to the very objects of your Institution. I find in the address put forth by the committee to the members, these words: "We are only carrying out the objects of our Institution and the wishes of its members, by affording mental amusement for all tastes of our supporters." I will not severely criticise that sentence, though it lies open to much

criticism. I have a much more important work before me than the criticism of sentences. I am willing to admit that it is loosely expressed, and I do not wish to take advantage of an incorrect expression. There are members of this Institution little above 12 or 13 years of age ; and if I wanted to turn it into ridicule, I might ask the committee whether they meant to say, in stating that principle, that they consider themselves bound to furnish books level to the capacity of children of 13 years of age. There are persons among you, I fear it must be said, of licentious feelings ; I am sure the members of the committee will not say they are bound to furnish mental amusement fitted to the taste of such persons. Yet if they mean anything, they must mean this—that if there be in the Society a large body of working men who hold certain views and opinions, it is their bounden duty to provide intellectual food suited to each of such classes.

For example : take the books objected to, and if there be a man who has a taste for socialism, it is then their duty to provide such books as Robert Owen's works ; or, if there be a taste for infidelity, it is their bounden duty to furnish the works of Tom Paine ; or, if a man descends in taste to a lower depth still, if he can revel in such works as the "Mysteries of London," it is the bounden duty of the committee to furnish him with books of that character. Admit that principle, and your Society is shattered into fragments.

Let there be a change of expression. The true way of stating the principle is this : not that it is their bounden duty to furnish mental food for all tastes, but that it is their duty to furnish books adapted for the tastes of all their supporters. There is an immense difference. If you lay down this principle, that they are bound to furnish books adapted to all

tastes of supporters, then every taste must be represented. But if you say they are to furnish books for the tastes of all supporters, then they are bound to furnish those which shall meet the wishes of all, and be disagreeable to none, such as shall be suited to those tastes which are common to all.

Let me give you a parallel case. In the higher classes of society, men of different ranks and attainments, and very various tastes, unite to form a society similar to yours. The clergyman, the medical man, and the lawyer, ladies and antiquaries, all join and form a lending library, book society, or whatsoever it may be called. Now it is plainly the duty of their committee to provide works which they may all read in common. There are certain tastes and principles in which they all agree. There is a large variety of books which meet all their tastes. This is the very principle of their union in a society. It is for this they have met and clubbed their money together. They perceive that they have certain tastes in common, and they combine, in order that they may be able to read more books than they could by buying them singly and separately. This is the principle.

Now suppose, instead of that, the committee were to resolve that there must be a shelf of divinity and a shelf of chemistry, for clergymen and medical men, and another shelf of black-letter books for antiquarians, and you will at once observe that the whole meaning of a society such as this is lost. The medical man and the clergyman join the general society to read books of general, and not of special, interest. If the clergyman wishes for his book of theology, and the medical man his medical authority, the one must form a clerical library, and the other must form his medical society. But in that case he must be content with limited numbers and means, exactly in proportion as the object of

association becomes limited and definite. Precisely so with this Society. I do not say that the members of this Institute have not a perfect right to form unions amongst themselves; but once give utterance to this principle—that it is the duty of the committee to furnish food for all tastes, then you will have not a society, but societies, not an institution, but a knot of clubs.

I call your attention to another point. In this paper, your committee hold it to be their duty to afford mental amusement for all tastes. Again I say, I will not rigorously press the exact meaning of words. It is a duty always to endeavour to ascertain what men mean, instead of ungenerously binding them by their words, which are often inexact. And, indeed, on looking at the titles of these books “of amusement,” I find that some are anything but amusing, but are books which require great exercise of intellectual faculties. But still some remark must be made on this idea of works of *amusement*.

It is the duty of the committee, in *part*, to furnish books of amusement. I said so in my opening address. I was greatly sneered at for saying so. Many well-meaning and religious persons said I had forgotten my place as a clergyman in speaking of works of fiction as fit for labouring men. They were shocked and startled that I dared to reckon it a matter of rejoicing that there is a moral tone in that well-known publication which is dedicated to wit and humour, or that I even named it. They were scandalised that I could find anything of moral significance in the works of Dickens. I stand to what I said. I do not like to characterise that kind of language severely; otherwise I should call it cant. It exhibits a marvellous ignorance of the realities and the manifoldness of human life. I am prepared to say that

works of fiction and amusement must and will be read, and that they ought to be read.

There is a deal of religion in an earnest, hearty laugh that comes ringing from the heart. That man is a bad man who has not within him the power of a hearty laugh. Therefore it cannot be denied that it is *part* of the duty of the committee to furnish works of amusement; but I cannot but acknowledge that it is a matter of surprise and regret that, even by an oversight, the committee should have represented it as their duty *chiefly* to furnish works of mere mental amusement. Your Rule declares that "The objects of this Institution are to provide means for the moral and intellectual *improvement* of its members." What has become of that high moral tone which characterised your first addresses to the public? Where are the men from whom I have heard, in the room below, language which did my heart good, and made me feel proud of my country, which made me compare it triumphantly with the language that men of the working classes were holding on the other side of the water? Men of the Brighton Working Men's Institute! how comes it that the language of your publications now is so immeasurably inferior in moral tone?

Once more, you owe it to the cause in which your Society is enlisted to reject peremptorily these infidel publications.

Every man, if he is not deterred by feeling for his own character, is deterred by feeling for his cause. There are many things that a soldier will do in his plain clothes which he scorns to do in his uniform. You have a cause, and I must acknowledge that the cause has received a severe blow by the proceedings of your last public meeting. I must admit, as I said before, that free institutions are looked upon now with eyes of jealousy and suspicion by many who lately

felt towards them very favourably. I have heard again and again this taunt,—“These are your friends, the working men; this comes of your philanthropy.” And others, in a less bitter spirit, have said, “I fear you will be disappointed in your hopes of these working men.” My friends, the working men! Would to God they were my friends. Would to God I were more their friend. I look back once more two thousand years, and dare not forget Who it was that was born into this world the son of a poor woman, and probably laboured for thirty years in a carpenter’s shop, a *Working Man!*

In reply to that sarcasm, I observe, it is to be remembered that the first use a man makes of every power and talent given to him, is a bad use. The first time a man ever uses a flail, it is to the injury of his own head and of those who stand around him. The first time a child has a sharp-edged tool in his hand, he cuts his finger. But this is no reason why he should not be ever taught to use a knife. The first use a man makes of his affections, is to sensualise his spirit. Yet he cannot be ennobled, except through those very affections.

The first time a kingdom is put in possession of liberty, the result is anarchy. The first time a man is put in possession of intellectual knowledge, he is conscious of the approaches of sceptical feeling. But that is no proof that liberty is bad, or that instruction should not be given. There is a moment in the ripening of the fruit when it is more austere and acid than in any other. It is not the moment of greenness, the moment when it is becoming red, the transition state, when it is passing from sourness into sweetness. It is a law of our humanity, that man must know both good and evil; he must know good *through* evil. There never was a principle

but what triumphed through much evil; no man ever progressed to greatness and goodness but through great mistakes.

There have been great mistakes made in this Society, and there are many difficulties; but you will weather the difficulties yet. The mistakes will become your experience. Nay, I believe that the discipline of character which many of you will have gained by this struggle with an evil principle, and the practical insight which it has given you into the true bearing of many social questions, in which I personally know that wild and captivating theories have been modified in your minds by this recent experience, will be invaluable. If only this had been gained, I believe the Institution would not have been established in vain. But if men say that all these difficulties tell against inquiry and education, I can only say that it proves we want more education. If I wanted a proof of that, I should find it in this—that the working men of Brighton have not yet got beyond Tom Paine.

This, then, brother men, is the reply to the taunts that have been made use of. But still I am bound to acknowledge this,—and I do it with shame and sorrow,—that there has been a handle put, by some of yourselves, into the hand of the bigot and the timid man. What, then, is all that the tyrants of the past have said true; and all that the philanthropists have said false? Were all their gloomy predictions sagaciously prophetic? What have the tyrant, the bigot, and the timid said? That it is impossible to give power to the people without making them revolutionary, or to give them instruction without making them infidel. You owe it to yourselves and to your cause to cast the imputation from you. And if Infidelity presumes to lay her hand upon the

ark of your magnificent and awful cause, the cause of the people's liberty, and men say that it is part and parcel of the system, give that slander to the winds, and prove, men of Brighton, by the rejection of these books, and by the re-organisation of your Society, that the cause of instruction and the cause of freedom are not the cause of infidelity.

TWO LECTURES ON THE INFLUENCE OF POETRY ON THE WORKING CLASSES

*Delivered before the Members of the Mechanics'
Institution, February 1852.*

LECTURE I.*

THE selection of the subject of this evening's Lecture, "The Influence of Poetry on the Working Classes," requires some explanation. What has Poetry to do with the Working Classes? What has it, in fact, to do with this age at all? Does it not belong to the ages past, so that the mere mention of it now is an anachronism—something out of date? Now, there is a large class of persons, to whom all that belongs to our political and social existence seems of such absorbing interest, that they look with impatience on anything which does not bear directly on it. A great political authority of the present day has counselled the young men

* As some of the topics contained in the following Lectures might seem out of place, as addressed to the members of a Mechanics' Institution, it may be well to state that they were delivered before a mixed audience. They are printed, with some additions, from the corrected notes of a short-hand reporter.

of this country, and especially of the Working Classes, not to waste their time on literature, but to read the newspapers, which, he says, will give them all the education that is essential. Persons of this class seem to fancy that the all-in-all of man is "to get on." According to them, to elevate men means, chiefly, to improve their circumstances; and, no doubt, they would look with infinite contempt on any effort such as this, to interest men on subjects which, most assuredly, will not give them cheaper food or higher wages. "Lecture them," they will say, "on the principles of political economy, in order to stem, if possible, the torrent of those dangerous opinions that threaten the whole fabric of society. Give them, if you will, lectures on science, on chemistry, on mechanics, on any subject which bears on real and actual life; but, really, in this work-day age, rhyming is out of place and out of date. We have no time for Poetry and prettiness." If, indeed, to have enough to eat and enough to drink were the whole of man—if the highest life consisted in what our American brethren call "going a-head"—if the highest ambition for Working Men were the triumph of some political faction, then, assuredly, the discussion of our present subject would be waste of breath and time.

But it appears to me, that in this age of Mechanics and Political Economy, when every heart seems "dry as summer dust," what we want is, not so much—not half so much—light for the intellect, as dew upon the heart; time and leisure to cultivate the spirit that is within us. The author of "Philip Van Artevelde," in his last published volume, "The Eve of the Conquest," has well described this our state of high physical civilisation and refinement, in which knowledge is mistaken for wisdom, and all that belongs to man's physical comfort and temporal happiness is sedulously

cared for, while much that belongs to our finer and purer being is neglected—an age of grim earnestness—not the noble earnestness of stern Puritanism for high principles, but one which is terrible only when the purse is touched.

“ Oh, England ! ‘Merry England,’ styled of yore !
Where is thy mirth ? Thy jocund laughter where ?
The sweat of labour on the brow of care
Makes a mute answer : driven from every door.
The May-pole cheers the village green no more,
Nor harvest-home, nor Christmas mummers rare ;
The tired mechanic at his lecture sighs,
And of the learned, which, with all his lore,
Has leisure to be wise ? ”

Whatever objection may deservedly belong to this lecture, I hope that no “tired mechanic” will sigh over its tediousness or solemnity. I believe that recreation is a holy necessity of man’s nature ; and it seems to me by no means unworthy of a sacred calling to bestow an hour on the attempt to impart not uninstrusive recreation to Working Men.

There are some other objections, however, connected with the subject, which must be noticed. Poetry may be a fitting study for men of leisure, but it seems out of the question for Working Men ;—a luxury for the rich, but to attempt to interest the poor in it, is as much out of place as to introduce them into a cabinet of curiosities, or a gallery of pictures. I believe such a feeling has arisen partly from this cause—that the Poetry of the last age was eminently artificial, unnatural, and aristocratic ; it reflected the outer life of modern society and its manners, which are conventional, uniform, polished, and therefore unnatural, and not of general human interest. I will read to you a description of that which one of the poets of that age thought to be

the legitimate call and mission of the poet. Thus writes Pope :—

“Poetry and criticism are by no means the universal concern of the world, but only the affair of idle men who write in their closets, and of idle men who read there. . . .

“All the advantages I can think of, accruing from a genius for Poetry, are the agreeable power of self-amusement, when a man is idle or alone ; the privilege of being admitted into the best company, and the freedom of saying as many careless things as other people without being so severely remarked on.”

You will scarcely wonder that when a poet could thus write of his art, working men and real men, who have no time for prettinesses, and have not the privilege of being “admitted into the best company,” should be indifferent to poetry, and that it should have come to be reckoned among the luxuries of the wealthy and idle ; nor will you be surprised that one who thought so meanly of his high work and duty, should never, with all his splendid talents, have attained to anything in Poetry beyond the second rank, that in which thought and memory predominate over imagination, and in which the heart is second to the head ; for much of Pope’s Poetry is nothing more than ethical thoughts tersely and beautifully expressed in rhyme.

There is another reason, however, for this misconception. The Poetry of the present age is, to a great extent, touched, tainted if you will, with mysticism. Let us trace the history of this.

A vigorous protest was made at last against the formalism of the Poetry of the last century. The reaction began with Wordsworth, Scott, and Byron, and the age of conventional Poetry was succeeded by the Poetry of sentiment and passion. But, by degrees, this wave also spent itself ; and another

came. Wordsworth was the poet of the few ; the border minstrelsy of Scott exhausted itself even during his own life ; and when that long, passionate wail of Byronism had died away, —a phase of tempestuous feeling through which every man, I suppose, passes in one portion or other of his existence—men began to feel that this life of ours was meant for something higher than for a man to sit down to rave and curse his destiny ; that it is at least manlier, if it be bad, to make the best of it, and do what may be done.

Next came, therefore, an age whose motto was "Work." But now, by degrees, we are beginning to feel that even work is not all our being needs ; and, therefore, has been born what I have called the Poetry of Mysticism. For just as the reaction from the age of Formalism was the Poetry of Passion, so the reaction from the age of Science is, and I suppose ever will be, the Poetry of Mysticism. For men who have felt a want which work cannot altogether satisfy, and have become conscious that the clear formulas and accurate technicalities of science have not expressed, nor ever can, the truths of the Soul, find a refuge in that vagueness and undefined sense of mystery which broods over the shapeless borders of the illimitable. And thus the very mystic obscurity of thought and expression which belongs to Browning, Tennyson, and even Wordsworth, is a necessary phase in the history of Poetry, and is but a protest and witness for the infinite in the soul of man.

For these two reasons, that the Poetry of the past age was conventional and that of the present mystical, it was very natural that Poetry should have come to be reckoned merely an amusement, suited to men of leisure. But it was not always so : Poetry began, not in the most highly civilised, but in the half-civilised stages of society. The Drama,

for example, was first acted in waggons drawn through the Grecian villages, and performed by men who only half concealed their personality by the rude expedient of smearing the face with the lees of wine. And before that, the poems of Homer had been recited with enthusiasm in the villages and cities of Ionia, by the people. The poems of Burns, himself a peasant, are the darling favourites of the Scottish peasant, and lie with his Bible, on the same shelf.

And where did our own English Poetry begin, but in those popular ballads of which you have a notable example in the epic ballad of "Chevy Chase"? Poetry is essentially of the people, and for the people.

However, it will be granted, perhaps, that the love of Poetry is compatible with an incomplete education; but hardly with a want of leisure, or with hard work. To this I reply, first, by a matter of fact: the works of Poetry in this Institution, since the loss of its first large library, are few; but those few are largely read. Upon the librarian, constant demands are made for the works of Shakspeare and Sir Walter Scott.

I reply, secondly: I know something myself of hard work; I know what it is to have had to toil when the brain was throbbing, the mind incapable of originating a thought, and the body worn and sore with exhaustion; and I know what it is in such an hour, instead of having recourse to those gross stimulants to which all worn men, both of the higher and lower classes, are tempted, to take down my Sophocles or my Plato (for Plato was a poet), my Goethe or my Dante, Shakspeare, Shelley, Wordsworth or Tennyson; and I know what it is to feel the jar of nerve gradually cease, and the darkness in which all life had robed itself to the imagination become light, discord pass into harmony, and physical

exhaustion rise by degrees into a consciousness of power. I cannot, and I will not, believe that this is a luxury, or rather a blessed privilege, reserved for me, or my class or caste, alone. If I know from personal experience—and I do know—that feelings such as these, call them romantic if you will, can keep a man all his youth through, before a higher Faith has been called into being, from every species of vicious and low indulgence in every shape and every form—if I believe that there are thousands

“ Whose hearts the holy forms
Of young imagination have kept pure,”

I am compelled also to believe that, as that which is human belongs to all humanity, so there is power in this pursuit to enable the man of labour to rise sometimes out of his dull, dry, hard toil, and dreary routine of daily life, into forgetfulness of his state, to breathe a higher, and serener, and purer atmosphere. I *will* believe that for him, too, there is an

“ Appeal to that imaginative power,
Which can commute a sentence of sore pain
For one of softer sadness.”

Some years ago, an Irishman, scarcely above a peasant in rank, was employed on the Ordnance Survey, under an officer of Engineers, in Suffolk, where I then was. I remember the description he gave me of the state of the Irish peasantry, and the scenes of wretchedness I had not then witnessed : “ Their cabins, your honour,” said he, “ are in such a state sometimes, that the poor cratures could count the stars as they lay on their beds.”

I am not prepared to dispute that it might have been better for the Irish peasant if, instead of lying on his bed

counting the stars and cursing the Saxon, he had got up and mended his roof ; nor will I enter into the question whether seven hundred years of English misrule have darkened all hope in the nation's breast, and left them neither heart nor spirit to mend and patch a hopeless lot ; but I think you will agree with me, that a hard-working man, to whose imagination the thought which spontaneously presented itself on the sight of a roofless hut, was, not that of dripping rain or driving winds, but of poor creatures lying on their beds to count the stars, who could get away from discomfort to expatiate in the skies, was, to some extent, through his imagination and his poetry, independent of external circumstances.

By the title of this Lecture I am bound to define, in the first place, what is meant by " Poetry " ; and, in the second, to endeavour to sustain the assertion " that it has a powerful influence on the Working Classes."

The former of these is the subject of this first Lecture. Our first definition of Poetry is—the natural language or excited feeling. When a man is under the influence of some strong emotion, his language, words, demeanour, become more elevated ; he is twice the man he was. And not only his words, and posture, and looks, but the whole character and complexion of his thoughts are changed. They belong to a higher order of imagination, and are more full of symbolism and imagery ; the reason of which is—that all the passions deal not with the limitations of time and space, but belong to a world which is infinite. The strong passions, whether good or bad, never calculate. Anger, for example, does not ask for satisfaction in gold and silver ; it feels and resents a wrong that is infinite ; Love demands the eternal blessedness of the thing loved—it feels, and delights to feel,

that it is itself infinite, and can never end ; Revenge is not satisfied with temporary pain, but imprecates the perdition of the offender.

And so, these passions of ours, uncalculating, and out-laws of time and space, disdaining the bounds of the universe,

“ Glancing from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven,”

never argue, but reach at a single bound the eternal truth, discover unexpected analogies hidden before through all the universe, and subordinate each special case to some great and universal law.

Hence, the language of strong emotion is always figurative, symbolical, and rich in metaphors. For the metaphors of Poetry are not mere ornaments stuck on, and capable of being taken off without detriment to the essence of the thought. They are not what the clothes are to the body, but what the body is to the life—born with it ; the form in which the life has been clothed, without which the life would have been impossible : just as Minerva is fabled by the ancients to have risen in full panoply out of the brain of Jupiter.

Poetry, I have said, is the *natural* language of excited feeling. It is not something invented or artificial, but that in which excited feeling naturally clothes itself. Now take an example. When the Pragmatic Sanction was violated on all sides in Europe, when Silesia had been wrested away by the young King of Prussia, and, with the assistance and sanction of the French, the Elector of Bavaria was aiming at the Crown of the Empire, the Empress Maria Theresa threw herself on her Hungarian subjects. We are told that when, robed in black, she appeared in the Diet, with her

child in her arms, and asked their assistance, the Hungarian nobles rose, and, with one voice, exclaimed, "Let us die for our King, Maria Theresa!" Observe the poetry of the expression, "our *King*, Maria Theresa." No calculation in that moment; no mercenary sordidness, balancing the question whether a nation could afford to defend weakness and honour at the expense of a costly war, or not. They had risen in one moment of strong emotion to the highest truth of human existence, the Law of Sacrifice: they had penetrated into that region in which kingly qualities had blended together the two sexes, and broken down the whole barrier of distinction between man and woman; that region in which tenderness and loyalty are not two, but one: "Let us die for our KING, Maria Theresa!"

You will perceive from this that there is an element of poetry in us all. Whatever wakes up intense sensibilities, puts you for a moment into a poetic state; if not the creative state, that in which we can *make* poetry, at least the receptive state in which we *feel* poetry. Therefore, let no man think that, because he cannot appreciate the verse of Milton or Wordsworth, there is no poetry in his soul; let him be assured that there is something within him which may any day awake, break through the crust of his selfishness, and redeem him from a low, mercenary, or sensual existence.

Any man who has for a single moment felt those emotions which are uncalculating, who has ever risked his life for the safety of another, or met some great emergency with unwavering courage, or felt his whole being shaken with mighty and unutterable indignation against some base cruelty or cowardly scoundrelism, knows what I mean when I say that there is something in him which is infinite,

and which can transport him in a moment into the same atmosphere which the poet breathes.

“High instincts,” Wordsworth calls them,

“Before which our mortal nature
Did tremble, like a guilty thing surprised :
. those first affections,
Those shadowy recollections
Which, be they what they may,
Are yet the Fountain-light of all our day,
Are yet the master-light of all our seeing :
Uphold us, cherish, and have power to make
Our noisy years seem moments in the being
Of the Eternal Silence. Truths that wake,
To perish never.”

Shakspeare, who knew all that man can feel, and the times when he feels it, is here, as usual, true to nature. You must have observed that he never puts language highly imaginative, what we call Poetry, into the lips of any except exalted characters, who may be supposed to live in Poetry, or persons who, for the time, are under some exciting influence. If you will compare the manner and expression of Timon of Athens, through the earlier acts, with his language in the latter part of the Play, you will see how he becomes another man under the influence of a powerful passion. At first, you have the high-born, high-bred gentleman, magnificent in his liberality, and princely in his tastes, bestowing a fortune on a dependent whose poverty is the sole bar to a happy marriage, giving away the bay courser to his guest because he admired it ; the munificent patron of the arts, using the conventional language and the flat, dead politeness of polished society, with no strong feeling of life, because nothing has broken the smoothness of its current. But the shock comes. In temporary reverses he begins to feel the

hollowness of friendship, suspects that men and women are not what they seem ; and then, with that passionate scorn which henceforth marks his character, the real poetry of Timon's existence begins. And this is made the more remarkable by the relief in which his character stands out from the contrast between two misanthropes in the same Play. One is the generous Timon, who has despaired of men because he has not found them what he expected them to be ; the other, the self-enclosed Apemantus, who believes in the meanness of all human natures because he is mean himself. Even when the two reciprocate abuse, the distinction is preserved. Apemantus is merely scurrilous—"beast" and "toad" are the epithets of his vocabulary. One pregnant word, alive with meaning, falls from Timon's lips—"Slave." And then, disappointed in his best and highest affections, the whole universe appears to his disordered imagination overspread with the guilt of his wrongs : earth and skies and sea are robbers ; yet his scorn is lofty still : even gold, the general seducer, he does not curse with the low invective of the conventicle.

Listen to the impassioned scorner :—

"Thou ever young, fresh, lov'd, and delicate wooer
Whose blush doth thaw the consecrated snow
That lies on Dian's lap ! Thou visible god,
That solder'st close impossibilities,
And mak'st them kiss ! That speak'st with every tongue
To every purpose ! O, thou touch of hearts !"

It is poetry throughout—passion rendered imaginative ; scorn, as contrasted with mere spite.

In saying, however, that Poetry is the language of excited feeling, by excitement is not to be understood mere violence or vehemence ; but intensity. It is with accurate knowledge

of human nature that Philip Van Artevelde says to Sir Fleuréant, who is imploring forgiveness with vehement self-reproach : "Thou art a weak, inconstant, violent man." Weakness and violence often go together. Passion may be violent ; as in the case of Othello, Lear, and Northumberland : it does not follow that it must : vehemence is simply dependent on physical organisation, a mere matter of brain and nerve. Indeed, the most intense feeling is generally the most subdued and calm : for it is necessarily condensed by repression. A notable example you have in Wordsworth, the calmest of poets ; so much so, that I have heard him characterised as a Quaker among poets. And yet he is the author of the sublimest ode in the English language, the Intimations of immortality from the recollections of childhood. And for his *intensity*, I only appeal to those who have understood his poetry, felt, and loved it.

Yet even in this apparent exception we have a corroboration of the rule. Intense as Wordsworth is, there is in him something wanting for the very highest poetry. He is too calm. There is a want of passion : and hence an entire absence of epic as well as dramatic power ; he reflects when he ought to describe, and describes feeling when he ought to exhibit its manifestation. He sings of our nature as some philosophic spirit might sing of it in passionless realms of contemplation, far away from the discords of actual existence, of a humanity purged and purified, separate from the fierce feelings and wild gusts of passion which agitate real human life. And therefore Wordsworth never can be popular in the true sense of the word. His works will be bought and bound richly, and a few of his poems will be familiar words ; but still he will remain the poet of the few : acknowledged by the many, only because he is revered by the few

those discerning few whose verdict slowly, but surely, leads the world at last.

I have said that Poetry is the natural language of intense feeling. It is in perfect accordance with this that the great master of all criticism, Aristotle, divides Poetry into two orders. He says a poet must be one of two things—a “frenzied man,” or an “accomplished man”; in which single sentence are contained whole volumes. There are two kinds of poets; the one inspired, and the other skilful: the one borne away by his own feelings, of which he is scarcely master; the other able rather to conceive feelings and simulate their expression, than possessed by, or possessing them.

Hence it is almost proverbial that the poetic temperament, except in a few cases of felicitously organised constitution, and rare equilibrium of powers, is one of singular irritability of brain and nerve.

Even the placid Wordsworth says—

“We poets in our youth begin with gladness:

But thereof come in the end despondency and madness.”

And by this, too, we can understand, and compassionate, I do not say excuse, the force of that temptation of stimulants to which so many gifted natures have fallen a sacrifice. Poetry is the language of excited feeling: properly of pure excitement. But stimulants, like wine, opium, and worse, can produce, or rather simulate, that state of rapturous and ecstatic feeling in which the seer should live; in which emotions succeed each other swiftly, and imagination works with preternatural power. Hence their seductive power.

Our higher feelings move our animal nature; and our animal nature, irritated, can call back a semblance of those emotions; but the whole difference between nobleness and

baseness lies in the question whether feeling begins from below or above. The degradation of genius, like the sensualising of passion, takes place when men hope to reproduce, through stimulus of the lower nature, those glorious sensations which it once experienced when vivified from above. Imagination ennobles appetites which in themselves are low, and spiritualises acts which are else only animal. But the pleasures which *begin* in the senses only sensualise.

Burns and Coleridge are the awful beacons to all who feel intensely, and are tempted to rekindle the vestal flames of genius, when they burn low, with earthly fire.

I give another definition of Poetry. I think I have seen it defined—I am not sure whether I have confounded my own thoughts with what I have a dim recollection of having somewhere read—as “the indirect expression of feelings that cannot be expressed directly.” We all have feelings which we cannot express. There is a world into which the poet introduces us, of which the senses are not the organs; there is a beauty which the eye has never seen, and a music which the ear has never heard. There are truths, eternally, essentially, and necessarily true, which we have never yet seen embodied. And there is, besides, from our human sympathies, a strong necessity for giving utterance to these cravings in us. For language has been given, not merely to make known our own selfish wants, but to impart ourselves to our fellow-men. Now, if these intense feelings could be expressed directly, so that when you expressed them, you felt yourself understood as adequately as when you say “I thirst,” or “I am hungry,” then there would be no Poetry at all; but, because this is impossible, the soul clothes her intuitions, her aspirations, and forebodings, in those indirect images which she borrows from the material world.

For this reason the earliest language of all nations is Poetry. Language has been truly called fossil Poetry: and just as we apply to domestic use slabs of marble, unconscious almost that they contain the petrifications of innumerable former lives, so in our every-day language we use the living Poetry of the past, unconscious that our simplest expressions are the fossil forms of feeling which once was vague, and laboured to express itself in the indirect analogies of materialism. Only think whence came such words as "attention," "understanding," "imagination."

As language becomes more forcible and adequate, and our feelings are conveyed, or supposed to be conveyed, entirely, Poetry in words becomes more rare. It is then only the deeper and rarer feelings, as yet unexpressed, which occupy the poet. Science destroys Poetry: until the heart bursts into mysticism, and out of science brings Poetry again; asserting a wonder and a vague mystery of life and feeling beneath and beyond all science, and proclaiming the wonderfulness and mystery of that which we seem most familiarly to understand.

I proceed to give you illustrations of this position, that, "Poetry is the indirect expression of that which cannot be expressed directly." An American writer tells us that, in a certain town in America, there is a statue of a sleeping boy, which is said to produce a singular feeling of repose in all who gaze on it; and the history of that statue, he says, is this:—The sculptor gazed upon the skies on a summer's morning, which had arisen as serene and calm as the blue eternity out of which it came; he went about haunted with the memory of that repose; it was a necessity to him to express it. Had he been a poet, he would have thrown it into words; a painter, it would have found expression on

the canvas ; had he been an architect, he would have given us his feelings embodied as the builders of the Middle Ages embodied their aspirations, in a Gothic architecture ; but being a sculptor, his pen was the chisel, his words stone, and so he threw his thoughts into the marble. Now, observe, first, this was intense feeling longing to express itself ; next, it was intense feeling expressing itself indirectly, direct utterance being denied it. It was not enough to *say*, "I feel repose" ; infinitely more was to be said, more than any words could exhaust : the only material through which he could shape it, and give to airy nothing a body and a form, was the imperfectly expressive material of stone.

From this anecdote we may understand in what sense all the high arts, such as Sculpture, Painting, and Poetry, have been called imitative arts. There was no resemblance between the sleeping boy and a calm morning ; but there was a resemblance between the *feeling* produced by the morning and that produced by gazing on the statue. And it is in this resemblance between the feeling conceived by the artist and the feeling produced by his work that the imitation of Poetry or Art lies. The fruit which we are told was painted by the ancient artist so well that the birds came and pecked at it, and the curtain painted by his rival so like reality that he himself was deceived by it, were imitative so far as clever deception imitates ; but it was not high art, any more than the statue which many of you saw in the Exhibition last year was high art, which at a distance seemed covered with a veil, but on nearer approach turned out to be mere deceptive resemblance of the texture, cleverly executed in stone. This is not the poetry of Art ; it is only the imitation of one species of material in another species : whereas Poetry is the imitating, by suggestion through

material and form, of feelings which are immaterial and formless.

Another instance. At Blenheim, the seat of the Duke of Marlborough, there is a Madonna, into which the old Catholic painter has tried to cast the religious conceptions of the Middle Ages, virgin purity and infinite repose. The look is upwards, the predominant colour of the picture, blue, which we know has in itself a strange power to lull and soothe. It is impossible to gaze on this picture without being conscious of a calming influence. During that period of the year in which the friends of the young men of Oxford come to visit their brothers and sons, and Blenheim becomes a place of favourite resort, I have stood aside, near that picture, to watch its effect on the different gazers, and I have seen group after group of young undergraduates and ladies, full of life and noisy spirits, unconsciously stilled before it; the countenance relaxing into calmness, and the voice sinking to a whisper. The painter had spoken his message, and human beings, ages after, feel what he meant to say.

You may, perhaps, have seen in this town, some years ago, an engraving in the windows of the printsellers, called "The Camel of the Desert." I cannot say it was well executed. The engraving was coarse, and the drawing, in some points, false; yet it was full of Poetry. The story tells itself. A caravan has passed through the desert; one of the number has been seized with dangerous illness, and as time is precious, he has been left to die, but as there is a chance of his recovery, his camel has been left beside him, and in order that it may not escape, the knee of the animal has been forcibly bent, the upper and lower bones tied together, and the camel couched on the ground, incapable of rising.

The sequel is that the man has died, and the camel is left to its inevitable doom. There is nothing to break the deep deathfulness of the scene. The desert extends to the horizon, without interruption, the glowing heat being shown by the reflection of the sun from the sands in a broad band of light, just as it glows on the sea on a burning summer day.

Nothing, I said, breaks the deathfulness of the scene ; there is only one thing that adds to it. A long line of vultures is seen in the distance, and one of these loathsome birds is hovering above the dead and the doomed ; the camel bends back his neck to watch it, with an expression of terror and anguish almost human, and anticipates its doom. You cannot look at the print without a vivid sense and conception of Despair. You go through street after street before the impression ceases to haunt you. Had the plate been better executed, it is quite possible it might not have been so poetical. The very rudeness and vagueness of it leave much to the imagination. Had the plumage of the vulture or the hair of the camel more accurately copied the living texture, or the face of the corpse been more deathlike, so as, instead of kindling the imagination with the leading idea, to have drawn away the attention to the fidelity with which the accessories had been painted, the Poetry would have been lessened. It is the effort to express a feeling, and the obstacles in the way of the expression, which together constitute the poetical.

Most of us visited the Exhibition in Hyde Park last year. Some may have seen between the central fountain and the Colebrook Dale gates, several cases of stuffed birds, and probably passed on after a cursory glance. If so, it was a pity, for there was much Poetry in those cases. They con-

tained a series illustrative of falconry.* In the first case was a gyr-falcon, hooded ; in the second, the falcon had struck his quarry, and the heron lies below with ruffled crest, and open beak, and writhing, serpentine neck, the falcon meanwhile fixing his talons deep, and throwing himself backwards with open wings to avoid the formidable beak. In the third, the falcon sits gorged upon its perch.

I have visited the finest museums in Europe, and spent many a long day in watching the habits of birds in the woods, hidden and unseen by them ; but I never saw the reproduction of life till I saw these. It was not merely the exquisite arrangement of the feathers, nor merely that the parts which are usually dry and shrunk in preserved specimens, the beak and the orbits, the tongue and the legs, were preserved with a marvellous freshness ; it was not the mere softness of every swell, and the graceful rise and bend wherever rise and bend should be, but it was the life and feeling thrown into the whole, that dignified these works as real Art. They were vitalised by the feeling, not of the mere bird-stuffer, but of the poet, who had sympathised with nature, felt the life in birds as something kindred with his own ; and inspired with this sympathy, and labouring to utter it, had thus re-created life as it were within the very grasp of death.

And while on this subject, I may give you another illustration, by which you will perceive the difference between Science and Poetry, in the works, if you have ever time to read them, published in a cheap form, of Wilson, the American ornithologist. Wilson was born at Paisley ; his first poetic

* Contributed to the Exhibition by Mr. Hancock, of Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

inspiration came from the perusal of the works of his countryman, Burns. He emigrated to America, and there devoted his life to ornithology. He studied the life of birds in their native haunts, and the result was a work which stands amongst the foremost in its own department, and which one of the greatest ornithologists of the day, Prince Lucien Bonaparte, has felt it an honour to arrange scientifically. Wilson's enthusiasm and imaginative temperament are manifested in the singular wish that when he died he might be buried in the woods, where the birds would sing above his grave. And all his writing is full of this living sympathy with life, and poetic power of perceiving analogies : as when he calls the Arctic Owl "that great northern Hunter," or describes the Goatsucker's discovery of the robbery of her nest. Whoever has read his works, or Waterton's Wanderings, or that sweet, observing description given by Banquo, in Macbeth, of the swallow's haunts and dispositions, and will compare the aspect in which life appeared to them with that in which it presents itself to the mind of the scientific nomenclator, will understand the different ways in which Intellect and Feeling represent the same objects, and how it is that largeness of sympathy distinguishes poetic sensibility from scientific capacity. Poetry creates life : Science dissects death.

Our present definition will help to explain why all the scenes of nature are poetic and dear to us. They express what is in us, and what we cannot express for ourselves. I love those passages in the Bible which speak of this universe as created by the WORD of God. For the Word is the expression of the thought; and the visible universe is the Thought of the Eternal, uttered in a word or form in order that it might be intelligible to man. And for an open heart

and a seeing eye it is impossible to gaze on this creation without feeling that there is a Spirit at work, a living WORD endeavouring to make Himself intelligible, *labouring* to express Himself through symbolism and indirect expression, because direct utterance is impossible; partly on account of the inadequacy of the materials, and partly in consequence of the dulness of the heart, to which the infinite Love is speaking. And thus the word poet obtains its literal significance of maker, and all visible things become to us the chaunted poem of the universe.

These feelings, of course, come upon us most vividly in what we call the sublime scenes of nature. I wish I could give to the Working Men in this room one conception of what I have seen and witnessed, or bring the emotions of those glorious spots to the hearts of those who cannot afford to see them. I wish I could describe one scene, which is passing before my memory this moment, when I found myself alone in a solitary valley of the Alps, without a guide, and a thunderstorm coming on ; I wish I could explain how every circumstance combined to produce the same feeling, and ministered to unity of impression : the slow, wild wreathing of the vapours round the peaks, concealing their summits, and imparting in semblance their own motion, till each dark mountain form seemed to be mysterious and alive ; the eagle-like plunge of the Lämmer-geier, the bearded vulture of the Alps ; the rising of the flock of choughs, which I had surprised at their feast on carrion, with their red beaks and legs, and their wild shrill cries, startling the solitude and silence, till the blue lightning streamed at last, and the shattering thunder crashed as if the mountains must give way : and then came the feelings, which in their fulness man can feel but once in life ; mingled sensations of awe and

triumph, and defiance of danger, pride, rapture, contempt of pain, humbleness and intense repose, as if all the strife and struggle of the elements were only uttering the unrest of man's bosom ; so that in all such scenes there is a feeling of relief, and he is tempted to cry out exultingly, There ! there ! all this was in my heart, and it was never said out till now !

But do not fancy that Poetry belongs to the grander scenes of nature only. The poets have taught us that throughout the whole world there is a significance as deep as that which belongs to the more startling forms, through which Power speaks.

Burns will show you the Poetry of the daisy,

“ Wee, modest, crimson-tippit flower,”

which the plough turns up unmarked ; and Tennyson will tell you the significance, and feeling, and meaning there are in the black ash-bud, and the crumpled poppy, and the twinkling laurels, and the lights which glitter on the panes of the gardener's greenhouse, and the moated grange, and the long, grey flats of “unpoetic” Lincolnshire. Read Wordsworth's “Nutting,” and his fine analysis of the remorse experienced in early youth at the wanton tearing down of branches, as if the desolation on which the blue sky looks reproachfully through the open space where foliage was before, were a crime against life, and you will feel the intuitive truth of his admonition that “there is a Spirit in the woods.”

Nay, even round this Brighton of ours, treeless and prosaic as people call it, there are materials enough for Poetry, for the heart that is not petrified in conventional about beauty. Enough in its free downs, which are

ever changing their distance and their shape, as the lights and cloud shadows sail over them, and over the graceful forms of whose endless variety of slopes the eye wanders, unarrested by abruptness, with an entrancing feeling of fullness, and a restful satisfaction to the pure sense of Form. And enough upon our own sea-shore and in our rare sunsets. A man might have watched with delight, beyond all words, last night, the long, deep purple lines of cloud, edged with intolerable radiance, passing into orange, yellow, pale green, and leaden blue, and reflected below in warm, purple shadows, and cold, green lights, upon the sea—and then, the dying of it all away. And then he might have remembered those lines of Shakspeare; and often quoted as they are, the poet would have interpreted the sunset, and the sunset what the poet meant by the exclamation which follows the disappearance of a similar aërial vision—

“ We are such stuff
As dreams are made of : and our narrow life
Is rounded with a sleep.”

No one has taught us this so earnestly as Wordsworth; for it was part of his great message to this century to remind us that the sphere of the poet is not only in the extraordinary, but in the ordinary and common.

“ The common things of sky and earth,
And hill and valley, he has viewed :
And impulses of deeper birth
Have come to him in solitude.

“ From common things, that round us lie,
Some random truths he can impart :
The harvest of a quiet eye,
That sleeps and broods on its own heart.”

But, of course, if you lead a sensual life, or a mercenary or artificial life, you will not read these truths in nature. The faculty of discerning them is not learnt either in the gin-palace or the ball-room. A pure heart, and a simple, manly life alone can reveal to you all that which seer and poet saw.

This lecture will be appropriately closed by a brief notice of the last work of our chief living poet, Alfred Tennyson. And I shall also endeavour to confute certain cavils raised against it : for after laying down what appear to be the true canons of criticism, they may be further substantiated by the exposure of criticism which is false.

The poem entitled "In Memoriam" is a monument erected by friendship to the memory of a gifted son of the historian Hallam. It is divided into a number of cabinet-like compartments, which, with fine and delicate shades of difference, exhibit the various phases through which the bereaved spirit passes from the first shock of despair, dull, hopeless misery and rebellion, up to the dawn of hope, acquiescent trust, and even calm happiness again. In the meanwhile many a question has been solved, which can only suggest itself when suffering forces the soul to front the realities of our mysterious existence ; such as : Is there indeed a life to come ? And if there is, will it be a conscious life ? Shall I know that myself ? Will there be mutual recognition ? continuance of attachments ? Shall friend meet friend, and brother brother, as friends and brothers ? Or, again : How comes it that one so gifted was taken away so early, in the maturity of his powers, just at the moment when they seemed about to become available to mankind ? What means all this, and is there not something wrong ? Is the law of Creation Love indeed ?

By slow degrees, all these doubts, and worse, are answered ; not as a philosopher would answer them, nor as a theologian, or a metaphysician, but as it is the duty of a poet to reply, by intuitive faculty, in strains in which Imagination predominates over Thought and Memory. And one of the manifold beauties of this exquisite poem, and which is another characteristic of true Poetry, is that, piercing through all the sophistries and over-refinements of speculation, and the lifeless scepticism of science, it falls back upon the grand, primary, simple truths of our humanity ; those first principles which underlie all creeds, which belong to our earliest childhood, and on which the wisest and best have rested through all ages : that all is right : that darkness shall be clear : that God and Time are the only interpreters : that Love is king : that the Immortal is in us : that—which is the key-note of the whole—

“ All is well, though Faith and Form
Be sundered in the night of fear.”

This is an essential quality of the highest Poetry, whose characteristic is simplicity ; not in the sense of being intelligible, like a novel, to every careless reader, without pain or effort : for the best Poetry demands study as severe as mathematics require ; and to any one who thinks that it can be treated as a mere relaxation and amusement for an idle hour, this Lecture does not address itself : but simplicity, in the sense of dealing with truths which do not belong to a few fastidious and refined intellects, but are the heritage of the many. The deepest truths are the simplest and the most common.

It is wonderful how generally the formalists have missed their way to the interpretation of this poem. It is some-

times declared with oracular decisiveness, that, if this be Poetry, all they have been accustomed to call Poetry must change its name. As if it were not a law that every original poet must be in a sense new : as if Æschylus were not a poet because he did not write an epic like Homer : or as if the Romantic poets were not poets because they departed from every rule of classical Poetry. And as if, indeed, this very objection had not been brought against the Romantic school, and Shakspeare himself pronounced by French critics a "buffoon" : till Schlegel showed that all life makes to itself its own form, and that Shakspeare's form had its living laws. So spoke the "Edinburgh Review" of Byron ; but it could not arrest his career. So spoke Byron himself of Wordsworth : but he would be a bold man, or a very flippant one, who would dare to say now that Wordsworth is not a great poet. And the day will come when the slow, sure judgment of Time shall give to Tennyson his undisputed place among the English poets as a true one, of rare merit and originality.

To a coarser class of minds "In Memoriam" appears too melancholy : one long monotone of grief. It is simply one of the most victorious songs that ever poet chaunted : with the mysterious undertone, no doubt, of sadness which belongs to all human joy, in front of the mysteries of death and sorrow ; but that belongs to "Paradise Regained" as well as to "Paradise Lost" : to every true note, indeed, of human triumph except a Bacchanalian drinking song. And that it should predominate in a monumental record is not particularly unnatural. But readers who never dream of mastering the plan of a work before they pretend to criticise details, can scarcely be expected to perceive that the wail passes into a hymn of solemn and peaceful beauty before it closes.

Another objection, proceeding from the religious periodicals, is, that the subject being a religious one, is not treated religiously; by which they mean theologically. It certainly is neither saturated with Evangelicalism nor Tractarianism; nor does it abound in the routine phrases which, when missed, raise a suspicion of heterodoxy; nor does it seize the happy opportunity afforded for a pious denunciation of the errors of Purgatory and Mariolatry. But the objection to its want of definite theology—an objection, by the way, brought frequently against Wordsworth by writers of the same school—is, in fact, in favour of the presumption of its poetic merit; for it may be the office of the priest to teach upon authority—of the philosopher according to induction—but the province of the poet is neither to teach by induction nor by authority, but to appeal to those primal intuitions of our being which are eternally and necessarily true.

With one of those criticisms I mean to occupy your time at somewhat further length. Some months ago a leading journal devoted three or four columns to the work of depreciating Tennyson. I will answer that critique now, as concisely as I can; not because it can do any permanent harm to Tennyson's reputation, but because it may do a great deal of harm to the taste of the readers.

Now, in any pretension to criticise a poetic work of internal unity, the first duty, plainly, is to comprehend the structure of it as a whole, and master the leading idea. It is to be regretted that this is precisely what English critics generally do not. Even with our own Shakspeare, admiration or blame is usually confined to the beauties and blemishes of detached passages. For the significance of each play, as a whole, we had to look, in the first instance, to such foreigners as Augustus Schlegel to teach us.

Let us inquire what conception the critic in question has formed of this beautiful poem.

“Let the acknowledgment be made at once that the writer dedicated his thoughts to a most difficult task. He has written 200 pages upon one person—in other words, he has painted 120 miniatures of the same individual.”

Mr. Tennyson has not painted 120 portraits of the same individual. He has written a poem in 120 divisions, illustrative of the manifold phases through which the soul passes from doubt through grief to faith. With so entire and radical a misconception of the scope of the poem, it is not wonderful if the whole examination of the details should be a failure.

The first general charge is one of irreverence. The special case selected is these verses, which are called blasphemous :—

“But brooding on the dear one dead,
And all he said of things divine,
(And dear as sacramental wine
To dying lips is all he said.)”

One would have thought that the holy tenderness of this passage would have made this charge impossible. However, as notions of reverence and irreverence in some minds are singularly vague, we will give the flippant objection rather more attention than it merits.

By a sacrament we understand a means of grace, an outward something through which pure and holy feelings are communicated to the soul. In the Church of Christ there are two sacraments—the material of one is the commonest of all elements, water ; the form of the other the commonest of all acts, a meal. Now, there are two

ways in which reverence may be manifested towards any thing or person : one, by exalting that thing or person by means of the depreciation of all others ; another, by exalting all others through it. To some minds it appears an honouring of the sacraments to represent them as solitary things in their own kind, like nothing else, and all other things and acts profane in comparison of them. It is my own deep conviction that no greater dishonour can be done to them than by this conception, which degrades them to the rank of charms. The sacraments are honoured when they consecrate all the things and acts of life. The commonest of all materials was sanctified to us in order to vindicate the sacredness of all materialism, in protest against the false spiritualism which affects to despise the body, and the world whose impressions are made upon the senses ; and in order to declare that visible world God's, and the organ of His manifestation. The simplest of all acts is sacramental, in order to vindicate God's claim to all acts, and to proclaim our common life sacred, in protest against the conception which cleaves so obstinately to the mind, that religion is the performance of certain stated acts, not necessarily of moral import, on certain days and in certain places. If there be anything in this life sacred, any remembrance filled with sanctifying power, any voice which symbolizes to us the voice of God, it is the recollection of the pure and holy ones that have been taken from us, and of their examples and sacred words—

“Dear as sacramental wine
To dying lips.”

In those lines, Tennyson has deeply, no doubt unconsciously—that is, without dogmatic intention—entered into

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the power of the sacraments to diffuse their meaning beyond themselves. There is no irreverence in them; no blasphemy; nothing but delicate Christian truth.

The next definite charge is more difficult to deal with before a mixed society, because the shades of the feeling in question blend into each other with exceeding fine gradation. The language of the friend towards the departed friend is represented as unfitted for any but amatory tenderness. In this blame the critic is compelled to include Shakspeare; for we all know that his sonnets, dedicated either to the Earl of Southampton or the Earl of Pembroke, contain expressions which have left it a point of controversy whether they were addressed to a lady or a friend. Now, in a matter which concerns the truthfulness of a human feeling, when an anonymous critic is on one side and Shakspeare on the other, there are some who might be presumptuous enough to suppose *à priori* that the modest critic is possibly not the one in the right. However, let us examine the matter. There are two kinds of friendship. One is the affection of the greater for the less; the other, that of the less for the greater. The greater and the less may be differences of rank, or intellect, or character, or power. These are the two opposites of feeling which respectively characterise the masculine and the feminine natures, the familiar symbols of which relationship are the oak and the ivy with its clinging tendrils. But though they are the masculine and feminine types, they are not confined to male and female. Most of us have gone through both these phases of friendship. Whoever remembers an attachment at school to a boy feeble than himself will recollect the exulting pride of guardianship with which he shielded his friend from the oppression of some young tyrant of the

playground. And whoever—at least, in boyhood or youth—loved a man, to whose mental or moral qualities he looked up with young reverence, will recollect the devotion and the jealousies, and the almost passionate tenderness, and the costly gifts, and the desire of personal sacrifices, which characterise boyish friendship, and which certainly belong to the feminine, and not the masculine type of affection. Doubtless the language of “In Memoriam” is tender in the extreme, such as a sister might use to a brother deeply loved. But it is to be remembered that it expresses the affection of the spirit which rejoices to confess itself the feeble; and, besides that, the man has passed into a spirit, and that time and distance have thrown a hallowing haze of tenderness over the lineaments of the friend of the past. It may be well also to recollect that there is a precedent for this woman-like tenderness, against whose authority one who condemns so severely the most distant approach to irreverence will scarcely venture to appeal. “I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan : very pleasant hast thou been to me. Thy love to me was wonderful, *passing the love of women.*”

Again, the praise and the grief of the poem are enormously “exaggerated”; and as an instance of the manner in which the “*poet* may underline the moralist,” and delicately omit the defects without hyperbolical praise, Dr. Johnson’s lines on Levett are cited with much fervour of admiration. Good, excellent Dr. Johnson ! sincerely pious ; very bigoted and very superstitious ; yet one, withal, who fought the battle of life bravely out, in the teeth of disease and poverty ; a great lexicographer ; of massive learning ; the author of innumerable prudential aphorisms, much quoted by persons who season their conversation with proverbs and old saws ; the inditer of several thousand ponderous verses ;

a man worthy of all respect. But it is indeed a surprising apparition when the shade of Dr. Johnson descends upon the Nineteenth Century as the spirit of a poet, and we are asked to identify the rugged portrait which Boswell painted, with a model of delicate forbearance.

After these general observations, the writer proceeds to criticise in detail : he awards some praise, and much blame. You shall have a specimen of each. Let us test the value of his praise. He selects for approbation, among others, these lines :—

“Or is it that the past will win
A glory from its being far :
And orb into the perfect star
We saw not when we moved therein ?”

The question has suggested itself as a misgiving to the poet's mind, whether his past affection was really as full of blessedness as memory painted it, or whether it be not the perspective of distance which conceals its imperfections, and throws purer hues upon it than it possessed while actual. In the rapid reading of the last two lines I may not have at once conveyed to you the meaning. So long as we remain upon any planet, this earth for instance, it would wear a common-place, earthly look : but if we could ascend from it into space, in proportion to the distance, it would assume a heavenly aspect, and orb or round itself into a star. This is a very simple and graceful illustration. Now hear the critic condescending to be an analyst of its beauties :

“There is indeed something striking and suggestive in comparing the gone by time to some luminous body rising like a red harvest moon behind us, lighting our path homeward.”

So that this beautiful simile of Tennyson's, of a distant

star receding into pale and perfect loveliness, in the hands of the critic becomes *a great red harvest moon!*

So much for the praise. Now for the blame. The following passage is selected :—

“ Oh, if indeed that eye foresee,
Or see (in Him is no before)
In more of life true love no more,
And love the indifference to be,

“ So might I find, ere yet the morn
Breaks hither over Indian seas,
That Shadow waiting with the keys,
To cloak me from my proper scorn.”

That is, as you will see at once, after the thought of the transitoriness of human affection has occurred to him, the possibility is also suggested with it, that he himself may change ; but he prays that before that day can come, he may find the Shadow waiting with the keys to cloak him from his own scorn. Now I will read the commentary :—

“Lately we have heard much of keys, both from the Flaminian Gate and Piccadilly, but we back this verse against Hobbs. We dare him to pick it. Mr. Moxon may hang it up in his window, with a 200*l.* prize attached, more safely than a Brahmah. That a shadow should hold keys at all, is a noticeable circumstance ; but that it should wait with a cloak, ready to be thrown over a gentleman in difficulties, is absolutely amazing.”

The lock may be picked without any exertion of unfair force.

A few pages before he has spoken of the breaking up of a happy friendship—

“There sat the Shadow, feared by man,
Who broke our fair companionship.”

Afterwards he calls it —

“The Shadow, cloaked from head to foot
Who keeps the key of all the creeds.”

Take, at a venture, any charity schoolboy, of ordinary intelligence ; read to him these lines : and he will tell you that the Shadow feared by man is death ; that it is cloaked from head to foot because death is mysterious, and its form not distinguishable ; and that he keeps the keys of all the creeds, because he alone can unlock the secret of the grave, and show which of all conflicting human creeds is true.

“It is a noticeable thing,” we are told, “that a shadow should hold keys at all.” It is a very noticeable thing that a skeleton should hold a scythe and an hour-glass : very noticeable that a young lady should hold scales when she is blindfold ; yet it is not a particularly uncommon rule of symbolism so to represent Time and Justice. Probably the writer in the criticism, if he should chance to read of “riding on the wings of the wind,” would consider it a very noticeable method of locomotion ; perhaps would inquire, with dull facetiousness, what was the precise length of the primary, secondary, and tertiary quills of the said wings ; and if told of a spirit clothing itself in light, he might triumphantly demand in what loom light could be woven into a great coat.

Finally. The critique complains that a vast deal of poetic feeling has been wasted on a lawyer ; and much wit is spent upon the tenderness which is given to “Amaryllis of the Chancery bar.” A barrister, it seems, is beyond the pale of excusable, because poetical sensibilities. So that, if my friend be a soldier, I may love him, and celebrate him in poetry, because the profession of arms is by all conventional

associations heroic : or if he bears on his escutcheon the red hand of knighthood, or wears a ducal coronet, or even be a shepherd, still there are poetic precedents for romance ; but if he be a member of the Chancery bar, or only a cotton lord, then, because these are not yet grades accredited as heroic in song, worth is not worth, and honour is not honour, and nobleness is not nobility. O, if we wanted poets for nothing else, it would be for this, that they are the grand levellers, vindicating the sacredness of our common humanity, and in protest against such downright vulgarity of heart as this, reminding us that—

“ For a’ that, and a’ that,
A man’s a man for a’ that.”

So much then for this critic : wrong when he praises, and wrong when he blames : who finds Shakspeare false to the facts of human nature, and quotes Dr. Johnson as a model poet : who cannot believe in the Poetry of any expression unless it bear the mint stamp of a precedent, and cannot understand either the exaggerations or the infinitude of genuine grief.

Let it serve to the members of this Institution as a comment on the opinion quoted at the outset, that it is sufficient education for Working Men to read the newspapers. If they form no more living conception of what Poetry is than such as they get from the flippant criticism of a slashing article, they may learn satire, but not enthusiasm. If they limit their politics to the knowledge they may pick up from daily newspapers (which, with a few honourable exceptions, seem bound to pander to all the passions and prejudices of their respective factions), they will settle down into miserable partizans. And if Working Men are to gain their notions of

Christianity from the sneering, snarling gossip of the religious newspapers, I, for one, do not marvel that indignant infidelity is so common amongst them.

And let it be to us all a warning against that detracting, depreciating spirit which is the curse and bane both of the religion and the literature of our day—that spirit which has no sympathy with aught that is great beyond the pale of customary formalities, and sheds its blighting influence over all that is enthusiastic, and generous, and high-minded. It is possible for a sneer or a cavil to strike sometimes a superficial fact; I never knew the one or the other reach the deep heart and blessedness of truth.

THE INFLUENCE OF POETRY ON THE WORKING CLASSES.

LECTURE II.

IN the former Lecture I endeavoured to answer the question—What is Poetry? Two replies were given: It is the natural language of excited feeling; and—A work of imagination wrought into form by art. We said that it arises out of the necessity of expression, and the impossibility of adequate expression of any of the deeper feelings in direct terms. Hence the soul clothes those feelings in symbolic and sensuous imagery, in order to *suggest* them.

And thus our definitions agree with two of Milton's requirements for Poetry—that it be “simple, sensuous, passionate.” Sensuous, that is, suggestive to the imagination of truth through images which make their impression on the senses. Passionate, that is, as opposed to scientific; for the province of Poetry is not the intellect, but the feelings.

And thus, too, they coincide with the character given to Poetry by the great critic of antiquity, as an imitative art: for it is the art of suggesting and thus imitating through form, the feelings that have been suggested by another form, or perhaps have arisen without form at all. So it takes its place with all art, whose office is not to copy form by form, but to express and hint spiritual truths.

It is plain, from what has been said, that Poetry may be

spoken of in two senses. In the specific or technical sense, by Poetry we mean the expression in words, most appropriately metrical words, of the truths of imagination and feeling. But in the generic and larger sense, Poetry is the expression of imaginative truth in any form, provided only that it be symbolic, suggestive, and indirect. Hence we said that there is a Poetry of sculpture, architecture, painting; and hence all nature is poetical, because it is the form in which the eternal Feeling has clothed itself with infinite suggestiveness: and hence Lord Byron calls the stars "the Poetry of heaven"; and tells us that to him "high mountains were a feeling"; and that mountain and wood and sky spake

"A mutual language, clearer than the tone
Of his land's tongue, which he would oft forsake
For Nature's pages, glassed by sunbeams on the lake."

And hence Wordsworth tells us that Liberty has two voices:

"One is of the sea,
And one is of the mountains."

And hence a greater than either has said that the Heavens speak, and that "There is neither speech nor language where their voices are not heard." And hence, too, Woman has been called the Poetry of life, because her presence in this lower world expresses for us, as well as calls out, those infinite feelings of purity, tenderness, and devotion, whose real existence is in our own bosoms. And hence, again, there is a Poetry in music: not in that in which sound imitates sound, as when the roaring of the sea, or the pattering of the rain, or church bells, or bugles, or the groans of the dying are produced, for in such cases there is only a mimicry, more or less ingenious; but that in which we can

almost fancy that there is something analogous to the inner history of the human heart—an expression of resolve or moral victory, or aspiration, or other feelings far more shadowy, infinite, and intangible : or that in which the feelings of a nation have found for themselves an indirect and almost unconscious utterance, as it is said of the Irish melody, that through it, long centuries of depression have breathed themselves out in cadences of a wild, low wail.

We divided poets into two orders: those in whom the vision and the faculty divine of imagination exist; and those in whom the plastic power of shaping predominates;—the men of poetic inspiration, and the men of poetic taste. In the first order I placed Tennyson; in the second, Pope.

Considerable discussion, I am told, has been excited among the men of this Institution by both these positions,—some warmly defending them, and others as warmly impugning. For myself, it is an abundant reward to find that Working Men can be interested in such questions;—that they can debate the question whether Pope was a poet, and be induced to read Tennyson. For the true aim of every one who aspires to be a teacher is, or ought to be, not to impart his own opinions, but to kindle other minds. I care very little, comparatively, whether you adopt my views or not; but I do care much to know that I can be the humble instrument, in this or higher matters, of leading any man to stir up the power within him, and to form a creed and faith which are in a living way, and not on mere authority, his own.

However, I will explain to you on what grounds I made these two assertions. And, first, as respects Pope—if any one approved of what I said, under the impression that I denied to Pope the name of poet, I must disclaim his approbation: I did not say so. Pope is a true poet: in his

own order he stands amongst the foremost ; only that order is the second, not the first. In the mastery of his materials, which are words, in the plastic power of expression, he is scarcely surpassed. His melody—I do not say his harmony, which is a much higher thing—is unquestionable. There is no writer from whom so many of those sparkling, epigrammatic sentences, which are the staple commodities of quotation, are introduced into conversation : none who can be read with more pleasure, and even profit. He has always a masculine fancy ; more rarely, imagination. But you look in vain for the truths which come from a large heart and a seeing eye ; in vain for the “ thoughts that breathe and the words that burn ” ; in vain for those flashes of truth, which, like the lightning in a dark night, make all luminous, open out unsuspected glories of tree and sky and building, interpret us to ourselves, and “ body forth the shapes of things unknown ” : truths which are almost prophetic. Who has not read his *Essay on Man*, again and again ? And yet it is but the philosophy of Bolingbroke, melodiously expressed in rhyme : whereas the office of Poetry is not to make us think accurately, but feel truly. And his *Rape of the Lock*, which seems to me the one of all his works that most deserves the name of Poetry, the nearest approach to a creation of the fancy, describes aristocratic society, which is uniform, polished, artificial, and out of which a mightier master of the art than Pope could scarcely have struck the notes of true passion. Moreover, its machinery, the Rosicrucian fancies of sylphs and gnomes, is but machinery, lifeless. If you compare Shakspeare’s *Ariel* or *Puck*, things alive, preternatural, and yet how natural ! with these automations, you will feel the difference between a living creation and cleverly moved puppet work. Throughout you have thought, not imagination : intellect, not intuition.

I read you last time Pope's estimate of his own art ; now, contrast it with the conceptions formed of Poetry by men whom I would place in the first order.

First, let Burns speak. The spirit of Scottish poesy has appeared to him, and given him his commission. She says—

“ I saw thee seek the sounding shore,
Delighted with the dashing roar :
Or when the North his fleecy store
Drove thro' the sky,—
I saw grim Nature's visage hoar
Struck thy young eye.

“ Or when the deep, green mantled earth
Warm cherish'd ev'ry flow'ret's birth,
And joy and music pouring forth
In ev'ry grove,—
I saw thee eye the gen'ral mirth
With boundless love.”

Observe that exquisite account of the true poetic or creative power, which comes from love, the power of sympathy with the happiness of all kinds of being—“ I saw thee eye the general mirth *with boundless love !*”

Wordsworth shall speak next. I select his Sonnet to Haydon. You remember poor Haydon's tragic end. He died by his own hand, disappointed because the world had not appreciated nor understood his paintings. It had been well for Haydon had he taken to heart the lesson of these lines, pregnant with manly strength for every one, poet or teacher, who is striving to express deep truths for which the men of his generation are not prepared.

And remark, merely by the way, in this sonnet, Wordsworth's corroboration of the view I have placed before you, that Poetry is a something to which words are the accidental, not by any means the essential form.

“ High is our calling, friend ! Creative Art,
 (Whether the instrument of words she use,
 Or pencil pregnant with ethereal hues,)
 Demands the service of a mind and heart,
 Though sensitive, yet, in their weakest part,
 Heroically fashioned—to infuse
 Faith in the whispers of the lonely Muse,
 While the whole world seems adverse to desert.
 And, oh ! when Nature sinks, as oft she may,
 Through long-lived pressure of obscure distress,
 Still to be strenuous for the bright reward,
 And in the soul admit of no decay,
 Brook no continuance of weak-mindedness—
 Great is the glory, for the strife is hard ! ”

We will next listen to the account given us by Milton, of the conditions under which Poetry is possible,—lofty and majestic, as we should expect from him :—

“ This is not to be obtained but by devout prayer to that Eternal Spirit that can enrich with all utterance and knowledge, and sends his seraphim with the hallowed fire of his altar to touch and purify the lips of whom he pleases. To this must be added industrious and select reading, steady observation, and insight into all seemly and generous acts and affairs.”

Tennyson shall close this brief list, with what he thinks the poet's calling :—

“ The poet in a golden clime was born,
 With golden stars above ;
 Dower'd with the hate of hate, the scorn of scorn,
 The love of love.”

That is,—The Prophet of Truth receives for his dower the scorn of men in whose breasts scorn dwells ; hatred from men who hate ; while his reward is in the gratitude and affection of men who seek the truth which they love, more eagerly than the faults which their acuteness can blame.

Influence of Poetry on the Working Classes. III

“ He saw thro’ life and death, thro’ good and ill,
He saw thro’ his own soul,
The marvel of the everlasting will,
An open scroll,
Before him lay.”

And again :—

“ Thus truth was multiplied on truth : the world
Like one great garden show’d,
And thro’ the wreaths of floating dark upcurled
Rare sunrise flow’d.

“ And Freedom rear’d in that august sunrise
Her beautiful, bold brow,
When rites and forms before his burning eyes
Melted like snow.”

Rare gifts of nature : power to read the “ open secret of the universe ” ; the apostleship of light, truth, liberty ; the faculty of discerning the life and meaning which underlie all forms : this is Tennyson’s notion of a poet. You have heard the master-spirits discoursing of their art. Now if after these, you turn to Pope’s conception again, you will feel there is a descent as into another region. A mighty gulf lies between. It is impossible to place these men in the same order. No man is higher than his own ideal of excellence ; it is well if he attains that. Pope reached all he aimed at : he reached no more.

I placed Tennyson in the first order. And this not from any bigoted blindness to his deficiencies and faults, which are many ; nor from any Quixotic desire to compare him with the very highest ; but because, if the division be a true one which separates poets into the men of genuine passion and men of skill, it is impossible to hesitate in which Tennyson is to be placed. I ranked him with the first

order, because, with great mastery over his material words, great plastic power of versification, and a rare gift of harmony, he has also Vision or Insight ; and because, feeling intensely the great questions of his day, not as a mere man of letters but as a man, he is to some extent the interpreter of his age, not only in its mysticism, which I tried to show you is the necessary reaction from the rigid formulas of science and the earthliness of an age of work, into the vagueness which belongs to infinitude, but also in his poetic and almost prophetic solution of some of its great questions.

Thus in his *Princess*, which he calls a "medley," the former half of which is sportive, and the plot almost too fantastic and impossible for criticism, while the latter portion seems too serious for a story so slight and flimsy, he has with exquisite taste disposed of the question which has its burlesque and comic as well as its tragic side, of woman's present place and future destinies. And if any one wishes to see this subject treated with a masterly and delicate hand, in protest alike against the theories which would make her as the man, which she could only be by becoming masculine, not manly, and those which would have her to remain the toy, or the slave, or the slight thing of sentimental and frivolous accomplishment which education has hitherto aimed at making her, I would recommend him to study the few last pages of the *Princess*, where the poet brings the question back, as a poet should, to nature ; developes the ideal out of the actual woman, and reads out of what she is, on the one hand, what her Creator intended her to be, and, on the other, what she never can nor ought to be.

And again, in his "In Memoriam," he has grappled with the scepticism of his age ; not like the school-divine, but like a poet ; not as a priest, with the thunder of the pulpit,

or the ban of the conventicle, but as a man : a man of large human heart, who feels that not doubt, but faith is greatness and blessedness, yet that doubt must not be put down by force or terror, nor silenced by logic, but pass into belief through sorrow; and by appeal to the intuitions of the Soul.

The severity with which an article written against this poem was criticised in the previous lecture, may have seemed to you more than adequate. Let me explain. Three things only in this world should receive no quarter : Hypocrisy, Pharisaism, and Tyranny. Hypocrisy, of course, is out of the question here. But by Pharisaism in religion, we mean, not attachment to forms, but an incapacity of seeing or believing in goodness separate from some particular form, either of words or ritual. The incipient stage of Pharisaism is that in which men are blind to excellence which does not belong to their own faction : the final and completed stage is that in which goodness seems actually evil. Plainly, there can be no remedy for that : when good is taken for evil, and evil for good, the heart has reached its last rottenness. By Pharisaism in art we mean, not an attachment to particular schools, but an inability of recognising beauty, except in accordance with conventional rules and established maxims ; its incipient stage is when beauty in aberrant types is not felt ; its final and hopeless stage is reached when such beauty appears deformity.

Now it was the Pharisaism of that article which appeared to me to deserve no common severity.

Tyranny merits the same treatment. Had it been from a feeble antagonist that this criticism proceeded, it might have been left unnoticed. Who "breaks a butterfly upon a wheel"? Or had it been vulgar, personal slander, it had been met, as all such things are best met, in silence. But

the journal in which this critique appeared is no vulgar slanderer ; scarcely ever is an article in its columns deficient in talent at least ; few would like to writhe beneath its lash. It wields a gigantic power. Well, it is excellent

“To have a giant's strength : but it is tyrannous
To use it like a giant.”

And because that article was written with merciless severity, weighted with all the authority of a powerful journal, and hidden behind the shelter of an anonymous incognito, therefore it seemed to me a bounden duty to show to Working Men that a giant can be crushed, and that they are not to be led blindfold by the press ; inasmuch as even an article in the “leading journal of Europe” may be flippant, clever, arrogant, and shallow.

We proceed to the more direct business of this evening : the *influence* of Poetry on the Working Classes. But first, I disclaim the notion of treating this subject as if Poetry had a different sort of influence on them from that which it has on other classes. Very false is that mode of thought which recognises the souls of the classes who are not compelled to work as composed of porcelain, and of those who are doomed to work as made of clay. They feel, weep, laugh, alike : alike have their aspiring and their degraded moods : that which tells on one human spirit, tells also upon another. Much, therefore, of what is to be said will belong to men of work ; not specially, but only as human beings. If Poetry influences men, it must influence Working Men.

The influence of Poetry depends partly on the form, and partly on the spirit which animates the form. I will consider the influence of form first.

We have defined Poetry to be a work of imagination

wrought into form by art. Poetry is not imagination, but imagination shaped. Not feeling; but feeling expressed symbolically : the formless suggested indirectly through form. Hence the form is an essential element of Poetry ; and it becomes necessary to trace its influence.

The form in which poetical feeling expresses itself is infinitely varied. There may be a poetical act, or a poetical picture, or a poetical aspect of scenery, or poetical words ; to which last form we technically give the name of Poetry.

Take an example from an expression of countenance, which may be poetical. There are feelings which cannot be spoken out in words ; therefore the Creator has so constituted the human countenance that it is expressive, and you only catch the meaning sympathetically by the symbolism of the features. We have all seen such Poetry. We have seen looks inspired. We have seen whole worlds of feeling in a glance ; scorn, hatred, devotion, infinite tenderness. This is what, in portraits, we call expression, as distinguished from similarity of feature. Innumerable touches perfect the one : sometimes one masterly stroke will suggest the other, so that nothing can add to it. This is Poetry. To such a look the addition of a word would have spoilt all—

“ For words are weak, and most to seek,
When wanted fifty-fold ;
And then, if silence will not speak,
And trembling lip, and changing cheek,
There’s nothing *told*.”

The form of Poetry, again, may be that of a symbolical action. The Eastern nations express themselves abundantly in this way : and if the subject were not too sacred, I might adduce many examples from the significant actions of the Hebrew prophets. But I will, instead, instance a case of

modern history. Perhaps you have read the anecdote (I do not know on what historical authority it rests) of the Earl of Warwick, in one of his last battles, probably that of Barnet, when he found the day going against him, dismounting from his favourite charger, and before all his army plunging his sword into his heart, thereby cutting off the possibility of escape, and expressing his resolve there to win or fall. Conceive Warwick putting that into direct words. Conceive his attempting to express all that was implied in that act : the energy of despair, the resolve, the infinite defiance, the untold worlds of *force* that must be in a man who could do an act, the whole terribleness of which none but a soldier could appreciate, slaying with his own hand the horse and friend that had borne him through death and perils. And conceive the influence upon the troops—how it must have said to any recreant waverer in the ranks, “Stand like a man, and dare to die.”

The next instance is a less dignified one ; but I select it that we may discern the manifold shapes and degrees of poetic form. History tells us of a prince of France who asked permission to offer a present to one much loved. The permission was given : the gift chosen, a portrait : but with a stipulation annexed, in order to prevent extravagance, that it should not be larger than could be worn as a ring upon the finger, and that it should not be set in jewels. The portrait was completed as agreed on ; but, instead of a glass, it was covered with a single plate, cut out of the centre of an enormous diamond, which, of course, was sacrificed in the cutting. When the ingenious treachery was discovered, the picture was returned : whereupon the royal lover ground the diamond to powder, and dusted with it, instead of sand, his letter of reply. The use of this? It was useless. Had it been a

matter of utility, it had not been one of Poetry. It was modified by French feeling, doubtless. Yet beneath it you will discern something that was not merely French, but human, and which constitutes the Poetry of the whole system of present giving. That which in the polite Frenchman was something more than gallantry, would have been in another, and in him too, under more earnest or less successful circumstances, the chivalrous feeling which desires to express itself in its true essence, as devotion to the weaker, through a sacrifice which shall be costly (the costlier the more grateful, as the relief of feeling to the giver), and which shall be quite immeasurable by, and independent of, the question of utility. The love of the base and plebeian spirit is the desire to *take* all it can. The love of the nobler spirit is the desire to *give* all it can. Sacrifice is its only true expression; and every form of sacrifice in which the soul tries to express and relieve itself, whether it be in the lavish magnificence in which self and life can be freely spent, or the vulgar magnificence called princely, with which gold and jewels can be squandered, is a form of Poetry, more or less dignified.

It will now be clear, that in the large sense of the word Poetry, its proper form is always symbolism. The poet derives his power from the ardour of mankind to adopt symbols, and catch enthusiasm from them. Poetry is the language of symbolism.

Therefore we all are susceptible of its influences. Many a man who thinks he has no taste for Poetry, because he does not chance to feel it in one of its forms, rhythmic words, is yet no stranger to its power. What is religious formalism, but an exaggeration or petrification of a true conviction—that outward forms and material symbols have a language of their own, fraught with a deeper, because infinite, religious

significance to the heart than ever came from the poor rhetoric of the pulpit? Why is it that on the battle field there is ever one spot where the sabres glitter faster, and the pistol's flash is more frequent, and men and officers crowd together in denser masses? They are struggling for a flag, or an eagle, or a standard. Strip it of its symbolism—take from it the meaning with which the imagination has invested it, and it is nothing but a bit of silk rag, torn with shot and blackened with powder. Now go with your common-sense and tell the soldier he is madly striving about a bit of rag. See if your common-sense is as true to him as his Poetry, or able to quench it for a moment.

Take a case. Among the exploits of marvellous and almost legendary valour performed by that great Chieftain, to whom, not many years ago, when disaster after disaster left it uncertain whether the next mail would bring us news that we possessed any Indian Empire at all, the voice of England, with one unanimous impulse, cried, "There is one man in Britain who has the right of wisdom as well as courage to command in chief,"—that daring warrior who, when the hour of danger was past, and the hour of safety had come, was forgotten by his country; to whom in the hour of fresh danger the people of England will look again, and his generous spirit will forget neglect; who has been laid aside uncoroneted and almost unhonoured, because he *would* promote and distinguish the men of work in preference to the men of rank, and wealth, and titled idleness—amongst his achievements not the least wondrous was his subjugation of the robber tribes of the Cutchee Hills, in the North of Scinde. Those warriors had been unsubdued for six hundred years. They dwelt in a crater-like valley, surrounded by mountains, through which there were but two or three narrow

entrances, and up which there was no access but by goat paths, so precipitous that brave men grew dizzy, and could not proceed. So rude and wild was the fastness of Trukkee, that the entrances themselves could scarcely be discovered amidst the labyrinth-like confusion of rocks and mountains. It was part of the masterly plan by which Sir Charles Napier had resolved to storm the stronghold of the robbers, to cause a detachment of his army to scale the mountain side. A service so perilous could scarcely be commanded. Volunteers were called for. There was a regiment, the 64th Bengal Infantry, which had been recently disgraced, in consequence of mutiny at Shikarpoor, their colonel cashiered, and their colours taken from them—a hundred of these men volunteered. “Soldiers of the 64th,” said the commander, who knew the way to the soldier’s heart, “your colours are on the top of yonder hill!” I should like to have seen the precipice that would have deterred the 64th Regiment, after words like those from the lips of the conqueror of Scinde!

And now, suppose that you had gone with common-sense and economic science, and proved to them that the colours they were risking their lives to win back were worth but so many shillings sterling value—tell me, which would the stern workers of the 64th Regiment have found it easiest to understand, common-sense or Poetry? Which would they have believed, Science, which said, “It is manufactured silk”; or Imagination, whose kingly voice had made it “colours”?

It is in this sense that the poet has been called, as the name imports, creator, namer, maker. He stamps his own feeling on a form or symbol: names it, and makes it what it was not before; giving to feeling a local habitation and a name, by associating it with form. Before, it was silk—so many square feet: now, it is a thing for which men will die.

And here we get at two distinctions—

First, between the poet and the rhymester. A poet is one who creates or names : who interprets old or new thoughts by fresh symbolism. The rhymester repeats the accredited forms and phrases : and because he has got the knack of using metaphors and diction, which have been the living language of the makers of them, he is mistaken for a poet. Smooth writing, and facility of versification, and expertness in piecing together poetical words and images, do not constitute Poetry.

Next, a distinction between the poet and the mystic. The poet uses symbols, knowing that they are symbols. The mystic mistakes them for realities. Thus to Swedenborg a cloud, or a vine, or a cedar, correspond throughout Scripture with one mystic spiritual truth ; mean one thing, and but one. And thus to the mystical formalist, a sign or symbol is confused with the truth which it symbolises : that symbol is *the* symbol of that truth : and to treat the symbol as Hezekiah treated the brazen serpent is sacrilege. Now, the poet remains sane upon this point : his “fine frenzy” never reaches the insanity which mistakes its own creations for fixed realities. To him a cloud or flower may express at different times a thousand truths : material things are types to him, in a certain mood, of this truth or that ; but he knows that to another person, or to himself in another mood, they are types of something else.

Tennyson has said this well—

“ But any man who walks the mead,
In bud, or blade, or bloom may find,
According as his humours lead,
A meaning suited to his mind.

For liberal applications lie
In Art as Nature, dearest friend :
So 'twere to cramp its use, if I
Should hook it to some useful end."

And this will help us to discern how far there is truth in the opinion that Poetry belongs to the earlier ages, and declines with the advance of civilization. Symbols perish—Poetry never dies. There was a time when the Trojan war, before Homer sang it, was what Milton says of the unsung wars of the Saxon Heptarchy, a conflict of kites and crows; the martyr's stake, a gibbet; Olympus and Parnassus, and a hill more holy still, common hills. The time may come when, as they were once without poetical associations, most of them shall be unpoetical again. And because of such a dying of the glory from the past, people begin to fancy that Poetry has perished. But is human courage lost, fidelity, imagination, honourable aims? Is the necessity of utterance gone, or the sufficiency of finite words for illimitable feeling greater? When the old colours of a regiment are worn out, it is sometimes the custom to burn them, and drink the ashes in wine, with solemn silence: before the consecration of new colours. Well, that is all we want. Let old forms and time-honoured words perish with due honour, and give us fresh symbols and new forms of speech to express, not what our fathers felt, but what we feel. Goethe says, "The spirit-world is not foreclosed. *Thy* senses are dulled; *thy* heart is dead. Arise, become a learner; and bathe that earthly breast of thine, unwearied, in the dew of a fresh morning."

And this alone would be enough to show that the Poetry of the coming age must come from the Working Classes. In the upper ranks, Poetry, so far at least as it represents their life, has long been worn out, sickly, and sentimental. Its

manhood is effete. Feudal aristocracy, with its associations, the castle and the tournament, has passed away. Its last healthy tones came from the harp of Scott. Byron sang its funeral dirge. But tenderness, and heroism, and endurance still want their voice, and it must come from the classes whose observation is at first hand, and who speak fresh from nature's heart. What has Poetry to do with the Working Classes? Men of work ! we want our Poetry from you—from men who will dare to live a brave and true life ; not like poor Burns, who was fevered with flattery, manful as he was, and dazzled by the vulgar splendours of the life of the great, which he despised and still longed for ; but rather like Ebenezer Elliott, author of the Corn Law Rhymes. Our soldier ancestors told you the significance of high devotion and loyalty which lay beneath the smoke of battle-fields. Now rise and tell us the living meaning there may be in the smoke of manufactories, and the heroism of perseverance, and the poetry of invention, and the patience of uncomplaining resignation. Remember the stirring words of one of your own poets :

“ There's a light about to break,
There's a day about to dawn :
Men of thought and men of action !
Clear the way ! ”

Consider, next, the influence of the spirit of Poetry as distinguished from the particular form in which it may be manifested.

The poets of the higher order are susceptible of a still further subdivision. There are those who project themselves out of their own particular being, and become by imagination one with that on which they meditate : and those who inform all they gaze on with their own individuality. Those,

that is, who sympathise with all that is created : and those whose imagination makes all to sympathise with them. I need not say which of these two classes is the domain of the higher Poetry. Wherever egoism enters, whether it be into life or into art, it degrades and narrows ; he through whom the universe speaks what God intended it to speak, is, as a poet, greater than he who through all the universe still only speaks out himself.

Now remark the different influence of these classes.

First, we have those whose imagination represents all nature as sympathising with them ; and just as through a coloured glass a landscape looks red, blue, or yellow, as the glass may be tinted, so does one feeling modify all others, and colour all things with its own hue. In some measure this is true of us all.

“ I may not hope from outward forms to win
The passion and the life, whose fountains are within.
O Lady ! we receive but what we give,
And in our life alone does nature live :
Ours is her wedding garment, ours her shroud ! ”*

We all possess this tendency when the imagination has been intensified by one single passion, or narrowed by one absorbing pursuit. Let me give you a very homely illustration. I was once passing through the finest street in England on the outside of a mail-coach. A young woman who sat near me, when we had reached the end of the street, suddenly exclaimed, “ I never saw so many narrow doors in all my life ! ” When the first surprise, produced by an exclamation so much in discord with my own thoughts, had subsided, I began to make inquiries, and discovered that her father was a builder. The builder's daughter had cast the hue of her

* Coleridge—“ Ode to Dejection.”

daily associations over everything. To her the buildings grey with the hoar of ages were as if they were not : historical interest, architectural beauty, solemn associations did not exist. To her there was nothing there but stones, graven by the stonemason's chisel, and doors measurable by the rule of the carpenter. And in the same way do we all colour nature with our own pursuits. To a sportsman, a rich field is covert for game : to a farmer, the result of guano: to a geologist, indication of a certain character of subjacent rock.

It is very instructive to observe how superstition can thus summon all nature to be the minister of our human history, especially when it is rendered more imperious in its demands by pride. There is scarcely an ancient family which has not the tradition of preternatural appearances preceding the death or connected with the destinies of the chief members of the race. Shakspeare, as usual, gives us this. Lear's anguish sheds the hue of ingratitude over the heavens. To Timon, sun, and moon, and stars are tinctured with his misanthropy. To Macbeth, meditating murder, all nature is preternatural, sounds of simple instinct ominous, and all things conscious of his secret.

“ Now o'er the one half-world
Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse
The curtain'd sleep ; now witchcraft celebrates
Pale Hecate's offerings ; and withered murther,
Alarum'd by his sentinel, the wolf,
Whose howl 's his watch, thus with his stealthy pace,
With Tarquin's ravishing strides, towards his design
Moves like a ghost. Thou sure and firm-set earth,
Hear not my steps, which way they walk, for fear
Thy very stones prate of my whereabout,
And take the present horror from the time,
Which now suits with it.”

“Come, sealing night,
Scarf up the tender eye of pitiful day ;
And with thy bloody and invisible hand,
Cancel, and tear to pieces, that great bond
Which keeps me pale ! Light thickens ; and the crow
Makes wing to the rooky wood ;
Good things of day begin to droop and drowse ;
While night’s black agents to their prey do rouse ! ”

Observe, again, how Casca’s conscience, already half-burdened, distorts the simplest phenomena :—

“Against the Capitol I met a lion,
Who glared upon me, and went surly by
Without annoying me ; and there were drawn
Upon a heap a hundred ghastly women
Transformed with their fear ; who swore they saw
Men all in fire walk up and down the streets.
And yesterday, the bird of night did sit
Even at noon-day upon the market-place,
Hooting and shrieking.”

Of all this apparent supernaturalism, Cicero gives the true account in reply :—

“Indeed, it is a strange disposed time ;
But men may construe things after their fashion,
Clean from the purpose of the things themselves.”

And Calphurnia, with a presentiment of her husband’s doom :—

“There is one within,
Besides the things that we have heard and seen,
Recounts most horrid sights seen by the watch.
A lioness hath whelped in the streets :
And graves have yawned and yielded up their dead :
Fierce, fiery warriors fight upon the clouds,
In ranks and squadrons and right form of war,
Which drizzled blood upon the Capitol :
The noise of battle hurtled in the air,
Horses do neigh, and dying men did groan :
And ghosts did shriek and squeal about the streets.”

Mark, too, how, as I said, pride has its share in giving shape to this superstition. Cæsar replies, the valour of the conqueror defying omens, and the large heart of the man recognising his subjection to the laws of a common humanity:

“Yet Cæsar shall go forth : for these predictions
Are to the world in general, as to Cæsar.”

But Calphurnia, with that worship of high birth which is peculiar to the feminine nature, answers:—

“When beggars die there are no comets seen :
The heavens themselves blaze forth the death of princes.”

So wonderful is that egoism of man which can thus overspread the heavens with its woes, and read in the planets only prophecies of himself! Now that which belongs to us all in some moods, is characteristic of some poets through all their nature, and pervades their work. The influence, therefore, of this class of Poetry, depends upon the *man*. The self which is thrown upon nature may be the lower or the higher self, and the influence will be correspondingly of the lower or the higher kind.

Among the former divisions of the egoistic class of first-rate poets, severe justice compels me with pain to place Lord Byron. Brought up under the baleful influences of Calvinism, which makes sovereign Will the measure of Right, instead of Right the cause and law of Will, a system which he all his life hated and believed—fancying himself the mark of an inexorable decree, and bidding a terrible defiance to the unjust One who had fixed his doom—no wonder that, as in that strange phenomenon the spectre of the Brocken, the traveller sees a gigantic form cast upon the mists, which he discovers at last to be but his own

shadow ; so, the noble poet went through life haunted, turn which way he would, with the gigantic shadow of himself, which obscured the heavens and turned the light into thick darkness.

Foremost among those in whom a higher self informs all objects, stands Milton. We are compelled to place him with those in whom egoism is not wholly absorbed in nature. Shakspeare is a "voice." Read Shakspeare through, and, except from some of his sonnets, you could not guess who or what manner of man he was. But you could not read Milton long without discovering the man through the poet. His domestic miseries are reflected in his *Samson Agonistes*. In his *Comus*, that majestic psalm to Chastity, are blended the antique heroism of his Pagan studies, and the Christian sanctities of his rare manhood. His very angels reason upon Puritan questions ; and it was the taunt of Pope, that in the Eternal lips themselves, redemption is a contrivance or scheme according to the systematic theology of a school divine. And yet the egoism with which all his Poetry is impregnated is the egoism of a glorious nature. If we were asked who in the eighteen Christian centuries stands before us as the highest approximation to what we conceive as Christian manhood, in which are rarely blended the opposites of purity and passion, gracefulness and strength, sanctity and manifold fitness for all the worldly duties of the man and the citizen, we should scarcely hesitate to answer—John Milton. The poet is overshadowed by the individual man : but the influence of the man is all for good.

Now compare with these the poets who see in Nature not themselves, but Nature ; who are her voice, not she theirs. Of this class, likewise, there are two divisions : the first represented by Shakspeare, the second by Wordsworth.

Shakspeare is an universal poet, because he utters all that is in men ; Wordsworth, because he speaks that which is in all men. There is much difference between these two statements.

The perfection of Shakspeare, like all the highest perfection, consists, not in the predominance of a single quality, or feeling, but in the just balance and perfect harmony of all. You cannot say whether the tragic element of our nature, or the comic, predominates ; whether he has more sympathy with its broad laugh, or its secret sigh ; with the contemplativeness of Hamlet, which lets the moment of action pass, or the promptitude of Hotspur ; with the aristocratic pride of Coriolanus, which cannot deign to canvass the mob for votes, or the coarse wit and human instincts of the serving men.

Wordsworth, on the contrary, gives to us humanity stripped of its peculiarities ; the feelings which do not belong to this man or that, this or that age, but are the heritage of our common nature. "That," says he in a private letter, "which will distinguish my poems hereafter from those of other poets is this : that while other poets laboured to exhibit that which distinguishes one man from another, especially the dramatic poets, I have made it my concern to exhibit that which is common to all men."

As a specimen of this, take that well-known poem :

"She was a phantom of delight,
When first she gleamed upon my sight :
A lovely apparition, sent
To be a moment's ornament ;
Her eyes as stars of twilight fair ;
Like twilight's, too, her dusky hair ;
But all things else about her drawn
From May-time's brightest, loveliest dawn ;
A dancing shape, an image gay,
To haunt, to startle, and way-lay.

“ I saw her upon nearer view,
A spirit, yet a woman too !
Her household motions light and free,
And steps of virgin liberty ;
A countenance in which did meet
Sweet records, promises as sweet ;
A creature not too bright or good
For human nature’s daily food ;
For transient sorrows, simple wiles,
Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears, and smiles.

“ And now I see with eye serene
The very pulse of the machine ;
A being breathing thoughtful breath,
A traveller between life and death ;
The reason firm, the temperate will,
Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill ;
A perfect woman, nobly planned,
To warn, to comfort, and command ;
And yet a spirit still and bright,
With something of an angel light.”

You will observe that it is not a portrait like one of Shakspeare’s, in which, gradually, a particular female character unfolds a personality which belongs to Miranda or to Juliet, and could not belong to Cleopatra or to Lady Macbeth : nor a description like Tennyson’s, which, if true of Isabel or Lilian, must be false of Adeline or Eleanore : nor, again, this or that woman, coloured in the false hues which passion or fancy has thrown on her for a time : but womanhood in its essence, and divested of its peculiarities of nation or century : such as her Creator meant her to be : such as every woman is potentially if not actually : such as she appears successively to the lover, the husband, and the friend, separating from such lover, husband, and friend, the accidents of an English, Spanish, or French temperament.

And yet, remark that this womanhood, so painted, is not a mere thin, unsubstantial abstraction of the intellect ; but a living, tangible image, appreciable by the senses, a single total impression, "sensuous," as Milton says of Poetry : else it would not be Poetry, but a scientific definition. You have before you an ideal clothed in flesh and blood, without the limitations of any particular idiosyncrasy.

This is the sense in which poets like Wordsworth are universal poets and free from egoism ; very different from the sense in which Shakspeare is universal.

Now to compare the various influences of these poets. And, first, to compare class with class. The poet in whom individuality predominates will have a more definite influence : he of whom universality is the characteristic, a more wide and lasting one. The influence of Cowper, Milton, or Byron, on individuals is distinct and appreciable : that of Homer and Shakspeare, almost imperceptible on single minds, is spread silently over ages, and determines the character of the world's literature and the world's feeling.

Comparing each class with itself, and taking first that which we have characterized as the more egoistic, the more popular will be almost always the less pure, because the passionate enthusiasm for what is great and good is shared by few, comparatively with the power of comprehending the might and force of what we commonly call the passions. Milton is placed with honour on our shelves. We read Byron through and through.

Next, of the poets of nature, Shakspeare, and the very few who can be ranked with him, will be more popular than such as Wordsworth ; not because he is greater, though he is, of course, immeasurably, but because his greatness, like that of nature's self, is broken into fragments, and all can find

in him something corresponding with their humour. Only a few, like Herschel and Humboldt, can comprehend with something like adequateness the Cosmos, or Order of the Universe; there is no one who cannot read a page of it. And so, very few of those who talk of Shakspeare's greatness, know *how* great he is; but all can mark with pencil dashes certain lines and detached acts; and if you examined the copy so dashed and marked, you would probably discover what in Shakspeare bears, or was supposed to bear, reference to the reader's own character, or more properly, illustrated his or her private prejudices, peculiarities, and personal history; but, unless a hand as free from egoism as Shakspeare's own had drawn the lines of approval, you would gain from the book of extracts made up of all such passages, not the nature of Man, but the idiosyncrasy of a man. Tell us, therefore, that a man's favourite poet is such as Wordsworth, and we know something about his character; but tell us that he delights in Shakspeare, and we know as yet no more of him than if it had been said that life has joys for him. He may be a Marlborough, or he may be a clown.

Permit me to offer you two pieces of advice, resulting from what has been said.

First, Cultivate universality of taste. There is no surer mark of a half-educated mind than the incapacity of admiring various forms of excellence. Men who cannot praise Dryden without dispraising Coleridge; nor feel the stern, earthly truthfulness of Crabbe without disparaging the wild, ethereal, impalpable music of Shelley; nor exalt Spenser except by sneering at Tennyson, are precisely the persons to whom it should in consistency seem strange that in God's world there is a place for the eagle and the wren, a separate grace to the swan and the humming-bird, their own fragrance to the

cedar and the violet. Enlarge your tastes, that you may enlarge your hearts as well as your pleasures: feel all that is beautiful—love all that is good. The first maxim in religion and in art is—sever yourself from all sectarianism; pledge yourself to no school; cut your life adrift from all party; be a slave to no maxims; stand forth, unfettered and free, servant only to the truth. And if you say, “But this will force each of us to stand alone:” I reply—Yes, grandly alone! untrammelled by the prejudices of any, and free to admire the beauty, and love the goodness, of them all.

Secondly, of the writers whom we call egoistic, in whom, that is, the man predominates over the poet, choose such only as are the unfeigned servants of goodness—I do not mean *goodliness*—to be your special favourites. In early life it is, I believe, from this class solely that our favourites are selected: and a man’s character and mind are moulded for good or evil far more by the forms of imagination which surround his childhood than by any subsequent scientific training. We can recollect how a couplet from the frontispiece of a hymn-book struck deeper roots into our being, and has borne more manifest fruits, than all the formal training we ever got. Or we can trace, as unerringly as an Indian on the trail, the several influences of each poet through our lives: the sense of unjust destiny which was created by Byron; the taint of Moore’s voluptuousness; the hearty, healthy life of Scott; the calming power of Wordsworth; the masculine vigour of Dryden. For it is only in after years that the real taste for the very highest Poetry is acquired. Life, and experience, as well as mental cultivation, are indispensable. In earlier life the influence of the man is mightier than that of the poet. Therefore, let every young man especially guard his heart and imagination against the

mastery of those writers who sap his vigour and taint his purity.

We proceed to name a few of the modes in which Poetry does actually influence men :

First. In the way of giving relief to feeling. It is a law of our nature that strong feeling, unexpressed either in words or action, becomes morbid. You need not dread the passionate man, whose wrath vents itself in words: dread the man who grows pale and suppresses the language of his resentment. There is something in him yet to come out. This is the secret of England's freedom from revolution and conspiracies: she has free discussion. Wrongs do not smoulder silently, to burst forth unexpectedly. Every grievance may have a hearing, and not being pent up, spends itself before it is dangerous.

“The land where, girt by friend or foe,
A man may speak the thing he will.”*

Now, there are feelings which, unuttered, would make a man dangerous—or morbid—or mad;—utterance relieves, and, weakening the *feeling*, makes the *man* strong.

“To me alone there came a thought of grief:
A timely utterance gave that thought relief,
And I again am strong.”

For such feelings the poets find us suitable expression. In an artificial state of society, perhaps some young, warlike spirit pines for a more dangerous life than our quiet days give. Well, he reads Scott's border raids, or “Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled,” or Hohenlinden, and the vivid forms of imagination receive, as it were, his superfluous

* Tennyson.

energies, and the chafing subsides in unreal battle-fields : or some diseased germ of misanthropy is enlarging in his heart—secret discontent with life ; disagreement with the world ; conflict between his nature and civil regulations. Let him read Byron—a dangerous cure—but in the end a certain one. Byron has said all that can be said upon the subject. What more can be added? There is no restless feeling left behind of something unsaid. Exhaustion follows—then health. For it is a mistake to think that Poetry is only good to nurse feeling. It is good for enabling us to *get rid* of feeling for which there is no available field of action. It is the safety-valve to the heart.

It has, besides, an elevating influence. It breaks the monotonous flatness of existence by excitement. Its very essence is that it exalts us, and puts us in a higher mood than that in which we live habitually. And this is peculiarly true of modern Poetry. A great critic* has said that the distinction between ancient and modern Poetry is, that the characteristic of the former is satisfaction, that of the latter aspiration. To the ancients this time-world was all. To round it with completeness, and hold all powers in harmonious balance, was their whole aim. Whereas, Christianity has dwarfed this life in comparison with the thought of an endless existence which it has revealed. To them the thought of death only came as a stimulus to increased enjoyment of that which must soon pass. To us that thought comes moderating and calming all pleasure. And hence the sad, dark character of Christian, especially northern Poetry ; as the utterance of a heart which is conscious of eternal discord rather than of perfection of powers ; and through it all there vibrates an under-tone of melancholy, adding even

* Schlegel.

to mirth a peculiar pathos. Is it not better that it should be so? Does not such Poetry therefore more peculiarly belong to Working Men, whose life is desire, not enjoyment; aspiration, not contentment?

Whoever will go into any Gothic cathedral in the evening, knowing nothing of the connoisseurship of architecture, and watch the effect produced on his mind by the lines which wander away, bewildering the eye with the feeling of endlessness, and losing themselves in the dark distances, and will then compare the total impression with that produced by the voluptuous, earthly beauty of a temple like the Madeleine in Paris, will understand, without the help of any scientific jargon, the difference between the ancient idea of satisfaction and the modern one of aspiration.

But when we say Poetry elevates, let it not be understood of the improvement of physical comforts. Poetry will not place a man in better circumstances; but it may raise him above his circumstances, and fortify him with inward independence; as Lovelace, the Cavalier poet, has very gracefully expressed, in lines written in confinement:—

“Stone walls do not a prison make,
Nor iron bars a cage:
Minds innocent and quiet take
That for a hermitage.

“If I have freedom in my love,
And in my soul am free,
Angels alone, that soar above,
Enjoy such liberty.”

And yet, as there are some persons who cannot conceive of human elevation except as connected with circumstantial condition, I must tell you an anecdote to satisfy even them.

A lady, with whose friendship I am honoured, was travelling last summer in the Lake district of Cumberland and Westmoreland. Being interested in education, she visited many of the National Schools in that country. For the most part the result was uninteresting enough. The heavy looks and stolid intellects, which characterise our English agricultural population, disappointed her. But in one place there was a striking difference. The children were sprightly, alert, and answered with intelligence all the questions proposed; traced rivers from their sources to the sea, explaining why the towns along their course were of such and such a character, and how the soil had modified the habits and lives of the inhabitants—with much of similar information. The schoolmaster had been educated at one of our great training seminaries. He was invited by the tourist to spend an hour at the hotel; and when, after a long conversation, she expressed her surprise that one so highly educated should bury himself in a retired, unknown spot, with small stipend, teaching only a few rustics, he replied, after some hesitation—"Why, Madam, when this situation was first offered me, I was on the point of marriage; and I calculated that it would be worth more to me to live on a small salary, with domestic peace, in the midst of this beautiful scenery, than on a much larger sum in a less glorious spot."

Now there are people who can only estimate the worth of a thing by what it will bring. What is the *use* of Poetry? Well, perhaps they may answer that question for themselves, if I have shown that refined taste may be an equivalent for half an income, and a sense of what is beautiful in God's world may make a poor man

"Passing rich with forty pounds a-year."

The tendency, again, of Poetry is to unite men together. And this both indirectly and directly.

It has been already said that the highest Poetry is that which represents the most universal feeling, not the most rare. It is in this sense that Milton's definition makes Poetry "simple"; that is, it deals with the feelings which we have in common, as men, and not with those which we possess as a particular sort or class of men; with the natural, rather than the trained, artificial, or acquired feelings; just as the botanist is simple in contrast with the horticulturist. The one seeks what is natural; and to him nothing in nature is a weed. The other seeks rarities and hot-bed monstrosities.

The Germans say that the world has produced only three poets of first-rate genius: Homer, Shakspeare, and Goethe. This, I suppose, is an exaggeration: nevertheless it is true that the highest poets have been, like them, not a class or caste, but of humanity. Take, almost at a venture, the first familiar names that present themselves.

Milton, by all the associations of education and refined taste, belonged to the royalists and the Church; but he threw himself, in spite of the vulgarities which repelled him personally from its worship and left him at last without visible worship, on the side of the conventicle, because in the days of the Stuarts the cause of the conventicle was the cause of liberty and truth.

Dante was a Romanist; but no slave was he of popery. His world-wide conception represents the heathens and the Christians of all ages as the subjects of one moral government, responsible to the laws impressed upon humanity rather than those written by the Church; and his severe justice does not scruple to consign a long list of bishops and popes to the eternal penalty of crimes.

Or, again, Byron and Shelley—aristocrats both by birth, yet no minions of a caste, nor champions of hereditary privilege—they were men ; and their power lay in this, that they were the champions of human rights, as well as utterers of the passion that is in men. So far as they are great, they are universal ; so far as they are small or bad, they are narrow and egotistical. And as time rolls on, that which is of self, limited and evil, will become obsolete, and wither, as the mortal warp and woof shrivelled on the arm of Halbert Glendinning, when he plunged it into the sacred flame to grasp the Volume of Truth at the bidding of the White Lady of Avenel ; and that of their works which will remain unconsumed will be the living flesh of the humanity that never dies—so much as is true to universal nature and to fact.

It is thus that the poets universalise and unite. “One touch of nature makes the whole world kin.” And, hence, Poetry has been silently doing a work for the poorer classes when they were not aware of it ; for even that Poetry which does not interest them, may be opening the hearts of the richer classes towards them. Did Burns teach the nobles no sympathy with the cares, and the loves, and the trials of the cotter’s life ? And when poor Hood wrote the “Song of the Shirt,” so touchingly expressive of the sorrows of an unknown class, the over-worked needlewoman, and all England thrilled to the appeal :

“O men, with sisters dear !
O men, with mothers and wives !
It is not linen you’re wearing out,
But human creatures’ lives—”

and when, in consequence, plan after plan was tried, and

investigations instituted, and a kindlier interest evoked to ameliorate their condition, tell us — Had Poetry done nothing for the Working Classes?

But it has a more direct influence than this in the way of uniting. Chiefly from that power with which the poetic nature is peculiarly gifted of discovering what Shakspeare calls the “soul of goodness in things evil.” Every great poet is a “double-natured man”; with the feminine and manly powers in harmonious union; having the tact, and the sympathy, and the intuition, and the tenderness of woman, with the breadth and massiveness of the manly intellect, besides the calm justice which is almost exclusively masculine. For this reason a poet, seeing into the life of things, is not one-sided; can see the truth which lies at the root of error; can blame evil without hysterically raving against every doer of it; distinguishes between frailty and villany; judges leniently, because by sympathy he can look upon faults as they appear to those who committed them; judges justly, because, so far as he is an artist, he can regard the feeling with which he sympathises from without; in a double way—realising it, but not surrendered to it.

I must quote two passages explanatory of the world of meaning contained in those few words of Shakspeare: the “soul of goodness in things evil.”

Wordsworth means the same when he says:—

“’Tis Nature’s law

That none the meanest of created things,
Of forms created the most vile and brute,
The dullest or most noxious, should exist,
Divorced from good—a spirit and pulse of good.
A life and soul, to every mode of being
Inseparably linked. Then be assured
That least of all can aught—that ever owned

The heaven-regarding eye and front sublime
Which man is born to, sink, howe'er depressed,
So low as to be scorned without a sin ;
Without offence to God cast out of view."

And again :—

" He who feels contempt
For any living thing, hath faculties
That he hath never used : and Thought with him
Is in its infancy."

One of the best illustrations I can remember of this prerogative of the poet to fasten the attention on what is human and loveable, rather than on what is evil, is Hood's "Bridge of Sighs." This little poem is suggested by the sight of a poor suicide, who has cast herself from one of the London bridges. Prudery, male or female, would turn from such a spectacle with disgust : the disciple of some school of cold divinity would see in it only a text for a discourse on hell. The poet discerns something in it of a deeper mystery, not so flippantly to be solved. He bids you

"Touch her not scornfully,
Think of her mournfully,
Gently and humanly ;
Not of the stains of her ;
All that remains of her
Now is pure womanly.
Make no deep scrutiny
Into her mutiny
Rash and undutiful ;
Past all dishonour,
Death has left on her
Only the beautiful."

And observe how, with exquisite truthfulness, he fixes your attention, not upon that in which the poor outcast

differs from you, but on that in which her sisterhood to the human family consisted and, for aught *you* may dare to say, still consists—

“ Wonderment guesses

Where was her home ?
Who was her father ?
Who was her mother ?
Had she a sister ?
Had she a brother ?
Or was there a nearer one
Still, and a dearer one
Yet, than all other ? ”

And mark how, without any feeble sentimentalism, without once confusing the boundaries of right and wrong, without hinting a suspicion that vice is not vice, and wrong not wrong—he simply reminds you that judgment does not belong to you, a fellow-creature and a sinner ; and bids you place her in the attitude in which alone *you* have a right to regard her now—

“ Cross her hands humbly,
As if praying dumbly,
Over her breast ;
Owning her weakness,
Her evil behaviour,
And leaving in meekness
Her sins to her Saviour.”

I should not like to be the woman who could read that poem without something more than sentimental tears, an enlarged humanity, and a deeper justice ; nor should I like to be the man who could rise from the perusal of it without a mighty throb added to the conviction that libertinism is a thing of damnable and selfish cowardice. Again, Poetry discovers good in men who differ from us, and so teaches

us that we are one with them. For the poet belongs to the world rather than to his party : speaks his party's feelings, which are human : not their watchwords and formulas, which, being forms of the intellect, are transitory, often false, always limited. Thus, Romanism and Puritanism, and their modern feeble descendants, as dogmatic systems, are forbidding enough. But listen to Dante, and you will feel that purgatory, false as a dogma, is true as the symbolism of an everlasting fact of the human soul. Hear Milton sing, and the *heart* of Puritanism is recognised as a noble and a manly thing. And, however repelled you may be by the false metaphysics, the pretensions to infallible interpretations, the cant phrases, and the impotent intolerance which characterise the dwarfed and dwindled Puritanism of our own days, out of which all pith and manhood appear to have departed, who does not feel disposed to be tender to it for Cowper's gentle sake? However out of date the effort of the Tractarian may seem to you, to reproduce the piety of the past through the forms of the past, instead of striving, like a true prophet, to interpret the aspirations of the present in forms which shall truly represent and foster them, what man is there to whose heart Keble has not shown that in Tractarianism, too, there is a "soul of goodness," a life and a meaning which mere negations cannot destroy?

Lastly, I name the refining influence of Poetry. We shall confine our proofs to that which it has already done in making men and life less savage, carnal, and mercenary ; and this especially in the three departments which were the peculiar sphere of the Poetry which is called romantic. Beneath its influence passion became love ; selfishness, honour ; and war, chivalry.

The first of these, as a high sentiment, can only be said to have come into existence with the Christianity of the Middle Ages. All who are familiar with the Greek and Roman Poetry, know that the sentiment which now bears the name, was unknown to the ancients. It became what it is when passion had been hallowed by imagination. Then, and not till then, it became loyalty to female worth, consecrated by religion. For the sacred thought of a Virgin Mother spread its sanctity over the whole idea of the sex. Christianity had given to the world a new object for its imagination ; and the idolatry into which it passed in the Church of Rome, was but the inevitable result of the effort of rude minds struggling to express in form the new idea of a divine sacredness belonging to feminine qualities of meekness and purity, which the ages before had overlooked. That this influence of the religious element of the imagination on the earthlier feeling is not fanciful but historical, might be shown in the single case of Ignatius Loyola, on whose ardent temperament the influences of his age worked strongly. Hence it was that there seemed nothing profane when the chivalrous gallantry of the soldier transformed itself by, to him, a most natural transition, into a loyal dedication of all his powers to One who was "not a countess, not a duchess, but much greater." But only think how he must have shrunk from this transference of homage, as blasphemous, if his former earthlier feelings had not been elevated by a religious imagination ; if, in short, his affections had been like those of the Greeks and Romans !

And while on the subject of the influence of all the higher feelings in elevating passion into that which is unselfish and pure, and even sublime, I will remind you of

those glorious lines of Lovelace in reply to a reproach on account of absence caused by duty :

“ Yet this inconstancy is such
As you, too, shall adore ;
I could not love thee, dear, so much,
Loved I not honour more.”

Under the influence of imagination, selfishness became honour. Doubtless, the law of honour is only half-Christian. Yet it did this : it proclaimed the invisible truth above the visible comfort. It consecrated certain acts as right, uncalculatingly and independently of consequences. It did not say—it will be *better* for you in the end if you do honourably. It said—you *must* do honourably, though it be not better for you to do it, but worse, and deathful. It was not religion ; but it was better than the popular, merely prudential, mercenary religion, which says, “Honesty is the best policy : godliness is gain : do right and you will not lose by it.” Honour said, Perhaps you *will* lose—all—life : lose then like a man ; for there is something higher than life, dearer than even *your* eternal gain. It was not purely religious : for it retained the selfish element. But it was a more refined selfishness which permitted a man to take another's life in defence of his honour, than that which requires him to do it in defence of his purse.

Finally, through poetic imagination war became chivalry. The practice of arms ceased to be “a conflict of kites and crows” ; it was guarded by a refined courtesy from every rude and ungenerous abuse of superior strength.

Upon this point there is much sophistry prevalent ; therefore it is worth while to see how the matter really stands. A truly great man—the American Channing—has said, I remember, somewhere in his works, that if armies were dressed in a hangman's or a butcher's garb, the false

glare of military enthusiasm would be destroyed, and war would be seen in its true aspect as butchery.

It is wonderful how the generous enthusiasm of Dr. Channing has led him into such a sophism. Take away honour, and imagination, and Poetry from war, and it becomes carnage. Doubtless. And take away public spirit and invisible principles from resistance to a tax, and Hampden becomes a noisy demagogue. Take away the grandeur of his cause, and Washington is a rebel, instead of the purest of patriots. Take away imagination from love, and what remains? Let a people treat with scorn the defenders of its liberties, and invest them with the symbols of degradation, and it will soon have no one to defend it. This is but a truism.

But it is a falsity if it implies that the mere change of symbolic dress, unless the dress truly represented a previous change of public feeling, would reverse the feeling with which the profession of arms is regarded. So long as people found it impossible to confound the warrior with the hangman, all that a change of garb could do would be to invest the sign with new dignity. Things mean become noble by association: the Thistle—the Leek—the Broom of the Plantagenets—the Garter—and the Death's Head and Cross Bones on the front of the Black Brunswickers, typical of the stern resolve to avenge their Chief—methinks those symbols did not exactly change the soldier into a sexton!

But the truth is that here, as elsewhere, Poetry has reached the truth, while science and common-sense have missed it. It has distinguished—as, in spite of all mercenary and feeble sophistry, men ever will distinguish—war from mere bloodshed. It has discerned the higher feelings which lie beneath its revolting features. Carnage is terrible. The

conversion of producers into destroyers is a calamity. Death, and insults to woman worse than death—and human features obliterated beneath the hoof of the war-horse—and reeking hospitals, and ruined commerce, and violated homes, and broken hearts—they are all awful. But there is something worse than death. Cowardice is worse. And the decay of enthusiasm and manliness is worse. And it is worse than death, aye, worse than a hundred thousand deaths, when a people has gravitated down into the creed that the “wealth of nations” consists, not in generous hearts—“Fire in each breast, and freedom on each brow”—in national virtues, and primitive simplicity, and heroic endurance, and preference of duty to life ;—not in MEN, but in silk, and cotton, and something that they call “capital.” Peace is blessed. Peace, arising out of charity. But peace, springing out of the calculations of selfishness, is not blessed. If the price to be paid for peace is this, that wealth accumulate and men decay, better far that every street in every town of our once noble country should run blood !

Through the physical horrors of warfare, Poetry discerned the redeeming nobleness. For in truth, when war is not prolonged, the kindling of all the higher passions prevents the access of the baser ones. A nation split and severed by mean religious and political dissensions, suddenly feels its unity, and men’s hearts beat together, at the mere possibility of invasion. And even woman, as the author of the “History of the Peninsular War” has well remarked, sufferer as she is by war, yet gains ; in the more chivalrous respect paid to her, in the elevation of the feelings excited towards her, in the attitude of protection assumed by men, and in the high calls to duty which arouse her from the frivolousness and feebleness into which her existence is apt to sink.

I will illustrate this by one more anecdote from the same campaign to which allusion has been already made—Sir Charles Napier's campaign against the robber tribes of Upper Scinde.

A detachment of troops was marching along a valley, the cliffs overhanging which were crested by the enemy. A sergeant, with eleven men, chanced to become separated from the rest by taking the wrong side of a ravine, which they expected soon to terminate, but which suddenly deepened into an impassable chasm. The officer in command signalled to the party an order to return. They mistook the signal for a command to charge; the brave fellows answered with a cheer, and charged. At the summit of the steep mountain was a triangular platform, defended by a breastwork, behind which were seventy of the foe. On they went, charging up one of those fearful paths, eleven against seventy. The contest could not long be doubtful with such odds. One after another they fell: six upon the spot, the remainder hurled backwards; but not until they had slain nearly twice their own number.

There is a custom, we are told, amongst the hillsmen, that when a great chieftain of their own falls in battle, his wrist is bound with a thread either of red or green, the red denoting the highest rank. According to custom, they stripped the dead, and threw their bodies over the precipice. When their comrades came, they found their corpses stark and gashed; but round both wrists of every British hero was twined the red thread!*

I think you will perceive how Poetry, expressing in this rude symbolism unutterable admiration of heroic daring, had

* "History of the Administration of Scinde," by Lieut.-Gen. Sir William Napier.

given another aspect to war than that of butchery : and you will understand how, with such a foe, and such a general as the English commander, who more than once refused battle because the wives and children of the enemy were in the hostile camp, and he feared for their lives, carnage changed its character, and became chivalry : and how it was that the British troops learned to treat their captive women with respect : and the chieftains of the Cutchee Hills offered their swords and services with enthusiasm to their conqueror : and the wild hill-tribes, transplanted to the plains, became as persevering in agriculture as they had been before in war.

And now to conclude. They tell us that scenes such as this may be called for in this our England. I do not pretend to judge. We only know that a military nation is at our doors with 450,000 gallant soldiers under arms, every man burning to wipe out the memory of past defeats, with one at their head the prestige of whose name recalls an era of unparalleled brilliancy, many of them trained in a school of warfare where the razzias of Africa have not taught either scrupulosity or mercifulness. We know that a chieftain who is to rule France with any hope of imperial influence, can best secure enthusiasm by giving victory to her armies ; and that French generals have already specified the way in which—I quote the words of Paixhas—a lesson might be taught to England which she should not soon forget.

No one who loves his country—no one who knows what is meant by the *sack of a town*, especially by French soldiers—can contemplate the possibility of such an event without a fervent hope that that day may never come. Nor does it become us to boast ; the enthusiasm of the platform is easy, and costs little ; and we may be called upon, before very

long, to show, by something more than words, whether there be steel in our hearts and hands, or not.

But thus much I will dare to say. If a foreign foot be planted on our sacred soil—if the ring of the rifle of the Chasseurs de Vincennes be heard upon these shores, terrible as the first reverses might be, when discipline could be met only by raw enthusiasm—thanks to gentlemen who have taught us the sublime mysteries of “capital” in lieu of the old English superstitions of Honour and Religion—they may yet chance to learn that British Chivalry did not breathe her last at Moodkee, or Ferozeshah, or Sobraon, or Goojerat, or Meeanee, or Hyderabad. They may yet be taught that there is something beyond the raw hysterics of a transient excitement in the spirit of self-sacrifice which we have learned from our Master’s cross. They may yet discover that amongst the artizans, and peasants, and working men of England, there are a thousand thousand worthy to be brothers of those heroic eleven who sleep beneath the rocks of Trukkee, with the red thread of Honour round their wrists.

LECTURE ON WORDSWORTH.

*Delivered to the Members of the Brighton Athenæum,
on February 10th, 1853.*

IN order to treat fully the subject which I have to bring before you this evening, I believe there are three points to which I ought principally to direct your attention. The first is, the qualifications necessary for appreciating poetry in general, and for appreciating the poetry of Wordsworth in particular. The second is the character and life of Wordsworth, so far as they bear upon his poetry, and so far as they may have been supposed to have formed or modified his peculiar poetical theories and principles. The third point is, the theories and poetical principles of Wordsworth, and how far they are true, how far they have been exaggerated, and how far Wordsworth has himself worked out the principles he has laid down.

Now, it will be plain that the last of these is the most important point of all : it is, in fact, *the* subject of our consideration ; but so many preliminary subjects have presented themselves which must be gone into before we enter upon this, that I have found it necessary to reserve this third topic for a succeeding lecture,* confining myself on the present

* This lecture was never delivered, owing to Mr. Robertson's ill-health.

occasion merely to the two first points that I have already named.

I have undertaken to lecture this evening upon Wordsworth. To some persons this will appear presumption ; to others, it will appear superfluous. To all the admirers of Wordsworth's genius it will appear presumption. To these I simply reply, I know well the difficulty of the subject, I know how impossible it is to treat it adequately ; I am aware that presumption is implied in the thought, that before it is possible to criticise a man one must sympathise with him, and that to sympathise with a man implies that there is, to a certain extent, a power of breathing the same atmosphere. Nevertheless, I reply that it is with me, at least, a work and labour of love ; nor can I believe that any one who has for years studied Wordsworth and loved him, and year by year felt his appreciation and comprehension of Wordsworth grow, and has during all those years endeavoured to make Wordsworth's principles the guiding principles of his own inner life—I cannot believe that such a man can have nothing to say which it is desirable should be heard by his fellow-men.

There is another class, however, to whom such a subject will seem superfluous ; for the general opinion about Wordsworth is exceedingly superficial. To the mass of the public all that is known of Wordsworth is a conception something like this : They have heard of an old man who lived somewhere in the Lake districts, who raved considerably of Lake scenery, who wrote a large number of small poems, all of them innocent, many of them puerile and much laughed at, at the time they appeared, by clever men ; that they were lashed in the reviews, and annihilated by Lord Byron, as, for instance, in those well-known lines :—

“A drowsy, frowsy poem, called the Excursion,
Writ in a manner which is my aversion ;”

and that he was guilty of a vast mass of other verses, all exceedingly innocent, and at the same time exceedingly dull and heavy. It is this class of persons whom I ask on the present occasion to listen quietly to the first subject I have to bring before them—the qualifications necessary for appreciating poetry in general and Wordsworth's poetry in particular.

Now, the first qualification I shall speak of as necessary for appreciating poetry is unworldliness. Let us understand the term employed. By worldliness, I mean entanglement in the temporal and visible. It is the spirit of worldliness which makes a man love show, splendour, rank, title, and sensual enjoyments ; and occupies his attention, chiefly or entirely, with conversations respecting merely passing events, and passing acquaintances. I know not that I could give a more distinct idea of what I mean by unworldliness, than by relating an anecdote of a boy of rare genius, inheriting genius from both parents, who, when he began the study of mathematics, was impressed with so strange and solemn a sense of awe, that never before, he said, had he been able to comprehend the existence of the Eternal. It is not difficult to understand what the boy meant. Mathematics contain truths entirely independent of Time and Space ; they tell of relations which have no connection, necessarily, with weight or quality ; they deal with the eternal principles and laws of the mind ; and it is certain, that these laws are more real and eternal than anything which can be seen or felt. This is what I mean by unworldliness : I am not speaking of it as a theologian, or as a religionist, but I am speaking of unworldliness in that sense, of which it is true of all science and high

art, as well as of Nature. For all high art is essentially unworldliness, and the highest artists have been unworldly in aim, and unworldly in life.

Let us compare the life of Benvenuto Cellini. I name him, because there has been given recently to the public a life of him in a popular form. Let us compare his life with the life of Raphael, or Michael Angelo, or Beethoven, or Canova. You will be struck with this difference, that in Benvenuto Cellini there was an entire absence of anything like aspiration beyond the Visible and the Seen; but in the life of the others there was the strong and perpetual conviction that the things seen were the things unreal, and that the things unseen were the things real; there was the perpetual desire to realise in a visible form, that beauty which the eye had not seen nor the ear heard, nor which it had ever entered into the heart of man to conceive. I will here quote one single passage in illustration of this; it is a translation by Wordsworth himself, from one of the sonnets of Michael Angelo: it is simply an illustration of what I have said:—

“Heaven born, the soul a heavenward course must hold;
Beyond the visible world she soars to seek
(For what delights the sense is false and weak)
Ideal form, the universal mould.
The wise man, I affirm, can find no rest
In that which perishes; nor will he lend
His heart to aught which doth on time depend.”

This is a view of high art: and in this respect poetry, like high art, and like religion, introduces its votaries into a world of which the senses take no cognizance; therefore I now maintain that until a man's eyes have been clarified by that power which enables him to look beyond the visible; until—

"He from thick films shall purge the visual ray,
And on the sightless eyeball pour the day,"

poetry—high poetry, like Wordsworth's—is simply and merely unintelligible.

I will give two or three illustrations of the way in which Wordsworth himself looked on this subject. The first is in reference to the power which there is in splendour and in riches to unfit the mind for the contemplation of invisible and spiritual truths. The sonnet I am about to read was written in September, 1802, the period during which the chief part of the poems I shall read this evening were written. I believe it was written to Coleridge.

"Oh! friend, I know not which way I must look
For comfort, being, as I am, opprest
To think that now our life is only drest
For show; mean handy-work of craftsman, cook,
Or groom!—We must run glittering like a brook
In the open sunshine, or we are unblest:
The wealthiest man among us is the best:
No grandeur now in nature or in book
Delights us."

The connection of these two things is what I wish to fasten your attention upon—

"The wealthiest man among us is the best,"

that being the spirit of society, then—

"No grandeur now in nature or in book
Delights us."

The second illustration is in reference to what is called scandal or gossip. According to Wordsworth, this is the highest manifestation of a worldly spirit. What is it but conversations respecting passing events or passing acquaint-

ances, unappreciated and unelevated by high principle? Wordsworth has written four sonnets, worthy of deep study, on this subject. After stating the matter in the first of these, in the second he supposes a possible defence against this habit of general conversation respecting others, derisively.

“ ‘Yet life,’ you say, ‘is life ; we have seen and see
And with a lively pleasure we describe ;
And fits of sprightly malice do but bribe
The languid mind into activity.
Sound sense, and love itself, and mirth and glee,
Are fostered by the comment and the gibe.’ ”

Then comes Wordsworth's comment :—

“ Even be it so ; yet still among your tribe,
Our daily world's true worldlings, rank not me !
Children are blest and powerful ; their world lies
More justly balanced ; partly at their feet
And part far from them ; sweetest melodies
Are those that are by distance made more sweet.
Whose mind is but the mind of his own eyes,
He is a slave ; the meanest we can meet ! ”

To understand this, you must carry in your recollection what Wordsworth's views of childhood and infancy are, as given in the sublime “Ode to Immortality.” A child, according to Wordsworth, is a being haunted for ever by eternal mind. He tells us that “Heaven lies about us in our infancy”—that the child moves perpetually in two worlds : the world that is seen right before him, and that terminated in another world—a world invisible, the glory of which is as from a palace—“That imperial palace whence he came ;” and that high philosophy and poetry are nothing but this coming back to the simple state of childhood, in which we see not merely the thing before us, but the thing

before us transfigured and irradiated by the perception of that higher life :—

“Children are blest and powerful ; their world lies
More justly balanced ; partly at their feet,
And part afar from them.”

Then Wordsworth goes on to show how poetry supplies the place which scandal and gossip had occupied.

“Dreams, books, are each a world ; and books, we know,
Are a substantial world, both pure and good :
Round these, with tendrils strong as flesh and blood,
Our pastime and our happiness will grow.
There find I personal themes, a plenteous store,
Matter wherein right voluble I am,
To which I listen with a ready ear ;
Two shall be named, pre-eminently dear,—
The gentle lady married to the Moor ;
And heavenly Una with her milk-white lamb.”

In other words, scandal is nothing more than inverted love of humanity. An absolute necessity, Wordsworth tells us, exists within us for personal themes of conversation that have reference to human beings, and not to abstract principles ; but when that necessity is gratified upon the concerns and occupations of those immediately around us, which necessarily become mixed with envy and evil feelings, then that necessity is inverted and perverted. So the place of detraction or scandal is by the poet occupied in personal themes ; as, for example, when a man has made the object of his household thoughts such characters as Desdemona and Spenser's Una, then he has something which may carry his mind to high and true principles, beyond the present. Then Wordsworth goes on to say,—

“Nor can I not believe but that hereby
Great gains are mine ; for thus I live remote
From evil speaking ; rancour, never sought,
Comes to me not, malignant truth nor lie.
Hence have I genial seasons, hence have I
Smooth passions, smooth discourse, and joyous thought :
And thus, from day to day my little boat
Rocks in its harbour, lodging peaceably.
Blessings be with them—and eternal praise,
Who gave us nobler loves, and nobler cares—
The Poets, who on earth have made us heirs
Of truth and pure delight by heavenly lays.”

I shall now read you a passage from a letter written by Wordsworth to Lady Beaumont, in which he answers the objection that his poems were not popular, and explains the reason why in one sense his poetry never could be popular with the world of fashion.

“It is impossible that any expectations can be lower than mine concerning the immediate effect of this little work upon what is called the public. I do not here take into consideration the envy and malevolence, and all the bad passions, which always stand in the way of a work of any merit from a living poet ; but merely think of the pure, absolute, honest ignorance in which all worldlings of every rank and situation must be enveloped, with respect to the thoughts, feelings, and images, on which the life of my poems depends. The things which I have taken, whether from within or without—what have they to do with routs, dinners, morning calls, hurry from door to door, from street to street, on foot or in carriage ; with Mr. Pitt or Mr. Fox, Mr. Paull or Sir Francis Burdett, the Westminster election or the borough of Honiton ? In a word—for I cannot stop to make my way through the hurry of images that present

themselves to me—what have they to do with endless talking about things nobody cares anything for, except as far as their own vanity is concerned, and this with persons they care nothing for, but as their vanity or *selfishness* is concerned? What have they to do (to say all at once) with a life without love? In such a life there can be no thought; for we have no thoughts (save thoughts of pain), but as far as we have love and admiration.

“It is an awful truth that there neither is, nor can be, any genuine enjoyment of poetry among nineteen out of twenty of those persons who live, or wish to live, in the broad light of the world—among those who either are, or are striving to make themselves, people of *consideration* in society. This is a truth, and an awful one; because to be incapable of a feeling of poetry, in my sense of the word, is to be without love of human nature and reverence for God.

“Upon this I shall insist elsewhere; at present, let me confine myself to my object, which is to make you, my dear friend, as easy-hearted as myself with respect to these poems. Trouble not yourself upon their present reception: of what moment is that, compared with what I trust is their destiny?—to console the afflicted; to add sunshine to daylight, by making the happy happier; to teach the young and the gracious of every age to see, to think, and feel, and therefore to become more actively and securely virtuous—this is their office, which I trust they will faithfully perform, long after we (that is, all that is mortal of us) are mouldered in our graves.”

And then, after some striking criticisms and analyses of his own poetry, he continues:—

“Be assured that the decision of these persons has nothing to do with the question; they are altogether incom-

petent judges. These people, in the senseless hurry of their idle lives, do not *read* books ; they merely snatch a glance at them that they may talk about them. And even if this were not so, never forget what, I believe, was observed to you by Coleridge—that every great and original writer, in proportion as he is great or original, must himself create the taste by which he is to be relished ; he must teach the art by which he is to be seen ; this, in a certain degree, even to all persons, however wise and pure may be their lives, and however unvitiated their taste. But for those who dip into books in order to give an opinion of them, or talk about them to take up an opinion—for this multitude of unhappy, and misguided, and misleading beings, an entire regeneration must be produced ; and if this be possible, it must be a work of *time*. To conclude, my ears are stone-dead to this idle buzz, and my flesh as insensible as iron to these petty stings ; and, after what I have said, I am sure yours will be the same. I doubt not that you will share with me an invincible confidence that my writings (and among them these little poems) will co-operate with the benign tendencies in human nature and society, wherever found ; and that they will, in their degree, be efficacious in making men wiser, better, and happier.”

In a subsequent letter to Sir George Beaumont, he says, “ Let the poet first consult his own heart, as I have done, and leave the rest to posterity—to, I hope, an improving posterity. . . . I have not written down to the level of superficial observers, and unthinking minds. Every great poet is a teacher : I wish either to be considered as a teacher, or nothing.”

So far have I tried to prove my point. If my allegations are true, then it follows that a man whose life is choked up

by splendour and by riches—a man whose sympathies are perverted by detraction and by gossip—a man whose object is in life to have for himself merely a position in what is called fashionable life—such a man is simply *incapable* of understanding the highest poetry.

The second qualification I shall name for the appreciation of poetry is feelings trained and disciplined by the truth of Nature. Let us understand this matter. Poetry represents things, not as they are, but as they seem ; and herein it coincides with all high art, for the difference between science and poetry is this—that science and philosophy endeavour to give to us things as they are, art and poetry represent to us things as they seem. Let us take a simple illustration. The painter represents his distant mountains blue, he gives us the distant circle in the oval of perspective, not because they are so, but because they seem so.

Now, in the same way, just as there are perverted senses to which all things seem unreal, and diseased or morbid senses to which, for example, there is no difference between green and scarlet, and as a man who has represented the glaring and glittering as beautiful, would yet find many who admired him, so, in the same way, in a matter of taste or poetry, there will be found minds perverted by convention, or injured by mere position, to whom Humanity and the Universe will not appear in their true colours, but rather falsely. Mere poets of fashion will have their admirers, just so far as there are those who are found like them, and just so far as their powers are great. For it must be remembered that if a thing seems such to a man, and he has the art of representing it as it seems, he is a great poet in the first instance, and if a man has that power to an eminent degree, he is a greater poet ; but the question whether he is a true

poet or not depends not upon *how* what he represented appeared to him, but upon the question whether it *ought* so to have appeared to him, or whether it does so appear to human nature in its most unsophisticated and purest mood. Then comes the difficulty : what shall be the test? If things seem to one man thus, and if they seem to another man thus, who shall tell us which is true and which is false poetry, and bring us back to a standard by which we may determine what is the judgment of human nature in its most unsophisticated mood? The tests are two. The first is feelings disciplined by Nature, the second is feelings disciplined through the minds of the acknowledged great masters and poets. The first test I have named is feelings disciplined by Nature ; for as in matters of art, there are a variety of tastes, it does not necessarily follow that there is no real test or standard of taste.

And just as the real standard is not the standard of the mass—is not judged by the majority of votes, but is decided by the few—so, in matters of poetry, it is not by the mass or by the majority of votes that these things can be tested ; but they are to be tested by the pure, and simple, and true in heart—by those who, all their life long, have been occupied in the discipline of feeling : for in early life poetry is a love, a passion ; we care not for quality, we care only for quantity ; the majesty and pomp of diction delight us ; we love the mere mellifluous flow of the rhyme : and this any one will understand who has heard the boy in the playground spouting, in school-boy phraseology, his sonorous verses. And so, as life goes on, this passion passes ; the love for poetry wanes, the mystic joy dies with our childhood, and other and more real objects in life and business occupy our attention. After twenty a man no longer loves poetry

passionately, and at fifty or sixty, if you apply to a man for his judgment, you will find it to be that which was his when a boy. The thirty years that have intervened have been spent in undisciplined feeling, and the taste of the boy is still that of the man—imperfect and undisciplined.

The other test to which I will refer is the judgment of the mind that has been formed on the highest models. The first test I have spoken of is, of course, Nature seen and felt at first hand ; the second test is Nature seen through the eyes of those who by universal consent are reckoned to have seen Nature best ; and without these it is utterly impossible that a man can judge well.

“These two things, contradictory as they seem, must go together — manly dependence and manly independence, manly reliance and manly self-reliance. Nor can there be given to a thinking man any higher or wiser rule than this—to trust to the judgment of those who from all ages have been reckoned great ; and if he finds that any disparity or difference exists between his judgment and theirs, let him, in all modesty, take it for granted that the fault lies in him and not in them ; for, as a great poet interprets himself to us, he is himself necessary to himself, and we must love him ere to us he will seem worthy of our love.” These lines are Wordsworth’s, and of no man are they more true than of himself. If you come to Wordsworth in order to find fault, and criticise, and discover passages that can be turned into ridicule or parodied, you will find abundant materials for your mood ; but if, on the other hand, in reliance on the judgment of some of the best and wisest of this age, you will take it for granted that there is something there to learn, and that he can and will teach you how to think and how to feel, I answer for it you will not go away disappointed.

And here lies the great difficulty, the peculiar difficulty of our age ; that it is an age of cant without love, of criticism without reverence. You read the magazines, and the quarterlies, and the daily newspapers, you see some slashing article, and after you have perused that article, in which the claims of some great writer have been discussed cursorily and superficially, you take it for granted that you understand, and can form a judgment upon the matter ; and yet, all the while, very likely that article has been written by some clever, flippant young man, to whom, for his own misfortune, and for the misfortune of the public, the literary department has been committed. What we want is the old spirit of our forefathers ; the firm conviction that not by criticism, but by sympathy, we must understand : what we want is more reverence, more love, more humanity, more depth.

The third qualification I shall name for an appreciation of poetry is, a certain delicacy and depth of feeling. I do not say that this is necessary for all poets,—nay, even for some of the highest it is not necessary ; for the epic poet appeals to all minds, he describes things which are applicable to all ; the dramatic poet appeals to all, because although unquestionably some of his characters move in an atmosphere that is unintelligible to the mass, yet in the multiplicity of characters he produces there must be a majority that are intelligible to all ; the poet of passion appeals to all, because passions are common to us all. It does not require, for example, much delicacy or profoundness to understand and feel the writings of Anacreon Moore ; but there are poets who give us truths which none can appreciate but those who have been engaged in watching faithfully the order in which feelings succeed each other, the successions of our inner life, the way in which things appear in this world when presented to our mind in our highest

state. No man needs this discipline and preparation more than the student of Wordsworth, for he gives to us the subtle and pure and delicate and refined succession of human feelings, of which the mind is scarcely conscious, except at the moment when the figure is before us, and we are listening with stilled breath to the mysterious march of our inner life.

I will now proceed to give you a few examples of this; but you will observe that I labour under peculiar disadvantages in doing so; for just in proportion as thoughts are delicate, and refined, and subtle, exactly in the same proportion are they unfit for public exposition; they may be fitted for the closet, the study, and for private reading, but they are not fitted for a public room; therefore, the most exquisite productions of Wordsworth I shall not bring before you now; all I shall read to you will be some that will give you a conception of what I have stated. For example, I quote one passage in which the poet describes the consecrating effects of early dawn:—

“What soul was his when from the naked top
Of some bold headland he beheld the sun
Rise up and bathe the world in light! He look'd—
Ocean and earth, the solid frame of earth
And ocean's liquid mass beneath him lay
In gladness and deep joy. The clouds were touch'd,
And in their silent faces did he read
Unutterable love. Sound needed none,
Nor any voice of joy; his spirit drank
The spectacle; sensation, soul, and form
All melted into him; They swallowed up
His animal being; In them did he live
And by them did he live; They were his life.
In such access of mind, in such high hour
Of visitation from the Living God,
Thought was not; in enjoyment i expired:
No thanks he breathed, he proffered no request:

Rapt into still communion that transcends
The imperfect offices of prayer and praise,
His mind was a thanksgiving to the Power
That made him ; it was blessedness and love ! ”

There is nothing in these lines except we have the heart to feel them. No man can understand or feel those lines who has led a slothful life, or who has not at one time or other loved to rise early,—no man who, in his early walks, has not mingled with a love of poetry a deep religious sense, who has not felt the consecrating effects of early dawn, or who has not at one time or another, in his early days, in a moment of deep enthusiasm, knelt down amidst the glories of Nature, as the ancient patriarch knelt canopied only by the sky above him, and feeling that none were awake but the Creator and himself,—bowed down to consecrate and offer up the whole of his life, experiencing also a strange, and awful, and mysterious feeling, as if a Hand invisible was laid upon his brow, accepting the consecration and the sacrifice.

In order to understand the next passage I shall quote, I must remind you of the way in which the ancient Pagans represented the same feeling. Most persons here, either through the originals, if they are acquainted with them, or through the translations, which in these times have multiplied, will remember how the ancient Pagan poets loved to represent some anecdote of a huntsman or shepherd, who, in passing through a wood and plucking some herb or cutting down some branch, has started to see drops of human blood issue from it, or at hearing a human voice proclaiming that he had done injury to some imprisoned human life in that tree. It was so that the ancients expressed their feelings of the deep sacredness of that life that there is in

Nature. Now let us see how Wordsworth expresses this. As usual, and as we might have expected, he brings it before us by a simple anecdote of his childhood, when he went out nutting. He tells us how, in early boyhood, he went out to seek for nuts, and came to a hazel-tree set far in the thicket of a wood, which never had been entered by the profane steps of boyhood before—as he expresses it, “A virgin scene.” He describes how he eyed with delight the clusters of white nuts hanging from the branches, and with exquisite fidelity to nature,—he tells us how he sat upon a bank and dallied with the promised feast, as we sometimes dally with a letter we have long expected, and which we know is now our own. At last the boy rose, tore down the boughs, and on seeing all the ravage and desolation he had caused by his intrusion there came over him a feeling of deep remorse.

“And unless I now
Confound my present feelings with the past ;
Ere from the mutilated bower I turned
Exulting, rich beyond the wealth of kings,
I felt a sense of pain when I beheld
The silent trees, and saw the intruding sky.—
Then, dearest maiden, move along these shades
In gentleness of heart ; with gentle hand
Touch—for there is a spirit in the wood.”

I preface the third illustration that I shall offer, by a remark reminding you that these scenes of Nature become, as it were, a possession of the memory. The value of having felt Nature in her loveliness or in her grandeur is not in the pleasure and intense enjoyment that was then and there experienced, but in this fact, that we have thenceforward gained something that will not be put aside ; a remembrance that will form a great part of our future life. Now, all of us—

any man who has seen the Alps, or who has seen an American hurricane, can understand this so far as Nature's grandeur is concerned ; but Wordsworth, as usual, shows us how our daily life and most ordinary being is made up of such recollections ; and, as usual, he selects a very simple anecdote to illustrate this. It is taken from a circumstance that occurred to him when on a journey with his sister on the lake of Ullswater ; they came upon a scene which, perhaps, few but himself would have observed. The margin of the lake was fringed for a long distance with golden daffodils,

“Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.”

And then, after describing this in very simple language, these lines occur :—

“The waves beside them danced ; but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee ;
A poet could not but be gay
In such a jocund company ;
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought :

“For oft, when on my couch I lie,
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude ;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.”

Now, I will give you a specimen of shallow criticism. In a well-known *Review* for the current quarter there is a review of Wordsworth ; and among other passages there is one in which the reviewer, with a flippancy which characterises the whole of the article, remarks that the passage which has just been read is nothing more than a versified version of a

certain entry in Miss Wordsworth's journal. How stands the fact? It is unquestionably true that there was an entry in Miss Wordsworth's journal, written in very striking prose, of the same sight which her brother and herself had seen; it is quite true that the first two stanzas and the greater part of the third were nothing more than Miss Wordsworth's very beautiful prose put into very beautiful verse. So far then, if you strike off the last stanza and the two lines of the stanza preceding it, you have nothing more than a versified version of the entry in Miss Wordsworth's journal; but then the last stanza contains the very idea of all, towards which all tended, and without which the piece would not have been poetry at all. What would you think of a man who denied to Shakspeare the praise of originality, on the ground that his plays were chiefly constructed from some ancient chronicler, Holingshed for example, or taken from the plot of some old play, and that in every play he had incorporated some hundred lines of the old play? What has Shakspeare added? Only the *genius*: he has only added the breath and life which made the dry bones of the skeleton live. What has Wordsworth added? He has added nothing except the *poetry*: nothing but the thought, the one lovely thought, which redeems the whole.

Now, I have quoted the passages you have heard, in order to call your attention to the subtle perception and the exquisite delicacy which are in them. I have reminded you of the difficulty I encounter in bringing them before a public audience. In reading Wordsworth the sensation is as the sensation of the pure water drinker, whose palate is so refined that he can distinguish between rill and rill, river and river, fountain and fountain, as compared with the obtuser sensation of him who has destroyed the delicacy of his palate by

grosser libations, and who can distinguish no difference between water and water, because to him all pure things are equally insipid. It is like listening to the mysterious music in the conch sea shell, which is so delicate and refined that we are uncertain whether it is the music and sound of the shell, or merely the pulses throbbing in our own ear ; it is like watching the quivering rays of fleeting light that shoot up to heaven as we are looking at the sunset ; so fine, so exquisitely touching is the sense of feeling, that we doubt whether it is reality we are gazing upon at all, or whether it is not merely an image created by the power and the trembling of our own inner imagination.

I will pass on, now, in the second place, to consider the life of Wordsworth, so far as it may be considered to have affected his poetry. We all know that Wordsworth was remarkable for certain theories of poetry, which, in his time, when they first appeared, were considered new, heterodox, heretical. On a future occasion I hope to examine these ; at present, I am bound to endeavour to investigate the question, how far Wordsworth's life and Wordsworth's character may be supposed to have formed, or, at all events, modified, these conclusions.

Now, first of all, I will remark that Wordsworth's was a life of contemplation, not of action, and therein differed from Arnold's of Rugby. Arnold of Rugby is the type of English action ; Wordsworth is the type of English thought. If you look at the portraits of the two men, you will distinguish this difference. In one there is concentrativeness, energy, proclaimed ; in the eye of the other there is vacancy, dreaminess. The life of Wordsworth was the life of a recluse. In these days it is the fashion to talk of the dignity of work as the one sole aim and end of human life, and

foremost in proclaiming this as a great truth we find Thomas Carlyle. Every man who pretends in any degree to have studied the manifold tendencies of this age will be familiar with the writings of Carlyle, and there can be no man who has studied them who does not recollect the vivid and eloquent passage in which Carlyle speaks of the sacredness of work. Now, it appears to me, that this word is passing almost into cant among the disciples of Carlyle; and even with Carlyle himself in these Latter-day pamphlets, in which he speaks of everything and every one not engaged in present work, as if the sooner they were out of this work-a-day world the better. In opposition to this, I believe that as the vocation of some is naturally work, so the vocation, the heaven-born vocation of others, is naturally contemplation.

In very early times human life was divided into seven parts, whereof six were given to work and one to rest, and both of these were maintained equally sacred—sacred work and sacred rest; and it is not uprooting that great principle, but carrying it out in its spirit, to say—that as of the seven parts of human life the majority belonged to work, so should a fraction be dedicated to rest; that though it is true of the majority that the life-law is work, yet it is also true that there is a fraction to whom by nature the life-law is the law of contemplation. But let no one suppose that contemplation, in the Wordsworthian sense of the word, is listlessness or inaction. There is a sweat of the brain, and a sweat of the heart, be well assured—working men especially—as much as there is a sweat of the brow; and contemplation, in Wordsworth's sense of the word, is the dedicating a life to the hard and severe inner work of brain: it is the retiring from the world, in order to fit the spirit to do its work.

Let us understand what this work was which Wordsworth

proposed to himself. At the period when Wordsworth came upon the stage, there were two great tendencies—and, in some respects, evil tendencies—which civilization and modern society were beginning to develop. The first of these was the accumulation of wealth ; the second was the division of labour.

I am not going to speak of the accumulation of wealth as a fanatic. I know some who say with reference to wealth and capital, that wealth is a necessary ingredient in the production of things, of which labour is the other ingredient, and without which labour will be altogether useless. I know that no nation has ever risen to greatness without accumulated capital ; and yet, notwithstanding this, there is a crisis in the history of nations—and a dangerous crisis it is—when the aristocracy of birth has been succeeded by the aristocracy of wealth : and a great historian tells us, that no nation has ever yet reached that crisis, without having *already* begun its downward progress towards deterioration.

There are chiefly, I believe, three influences counteractive of that great danger, accumulated wealth. The first is religion, the second is hereditary rank, and the third is the influence of men of contemplative lives. The first is religion, of which, as belonging to another place, for the sake of reverence, I will not speak here. The second counteracting influence to accumulated wealth is hereditary rank. It is not generally the fashion in the present day to speak highly of rank, much less before the members of an Athenæum or of a Working Man's Institute ; it is the fashion, rather, to speak of our common Humanity, and to deprecate Rank ; and good and right it is that common Humanity should be dignified, and elevated far above the distinction of convention and all the arbitrary and artificial differences of class ;

and yet, after all this, in an age when it certainly is not the fashion to speak well of hereditary rank, it is well for us all to remember the advantages that have accrued to us in the past, from that hereditary rank. I will say that Rank is a power in itself more spiritual, because less tangible, than the power of wealth. The man who commands others by the extent of his broad acres, or by the number of his bales of cotton, rules them by a power more degrading and more earthly than he who rules them simply by the *prestige* of long hereditary claims.

You all remember how well Sir Walter Scott has described this power as existing more strongly among the Highlanders of Scotland than in any other nation. In the "Fair Maid of Perth," for example, in the contest between the clans, you will remember how every clansman dedicated himself to certain death for the sake of his chieftain, and how a young man, with no wealth, unknown before, nay, having in himself no intrinsic worth or goodness, obtained a loyalty and devotion that royalty itself could scarcely win; a devotion and love that all the wealth of the burghers of Perth never could have purchased: and you feel that so long as there was such a power in Scotland it was impossible that the burghers of Perth, with all their wealth, could obtain undisputed predominancy. So long as this power exists, the power of wealth has something to be thrown in the scale against it; and therefore it is that, with feelings strong on the side of human progress, and with but little reverence for mushroom rank, I am yet free to acknowledge that I feel sometimes a pang, when I hear or read of the extinction of great names, grey with the hoar of innumerable ages—sorrow, when I read in paper after paper of the passing of great ancestral estates under the hammer of the

auctioneer ; and for this reason, that in every such case I feel that there is one more sword gone that would have helped us in the battle which we must all fight against the superstitious idolatry of Wealth.

The third counteracting influence is the existence of men of contemplative minds—men of science and philosophy. You may call them useless, but they are men whose vocation elevates them above the existing world, and makes them indifferent to show and splendour, and therefore they can throw their influence and weight in the scale against the aristocracy of wealth. The other evil I have spoken of, I called the division of labour : and here, again, I speak not as a fanatic. Political economists, Adam Smith for example, tell us that in the fabrication of a pin, from ten to eighteen men are required. One cuts the wire, another draws it, a third points it, three are required to make the head, another to polish it, and it is a separate work even to put the pin into the paper. And now we know the advantage of all this.

The political economist tells us that ten such men working together can make in a single day forty or fifty thousand pins, whereas, had they worked separately, they could scarcely have made ten. We all know the advantage of this ; we know that a man becomes more expert by directing his whole attention to one particular branch of a trade than by wasting it on many ; we know that time is thus saved, which would otherwise be spent in going from one work to another ; we know that the inventive faculty is consequently quickened, because a man who is for ever considering one subject only is also enabled to occupy his attention with the thought as to how the operation can be most simplified. These are great advantages ; yet no man

can persuade me that with these advantages there are not also great disadvantages to the *inner life* of the man so engaged. We get a perfect pin, but we get most imperfect *men*, for while one man is engaged in polishing the pin, and another is engaged in sharpening it, what have we? We have nothing more in the man than a pin polisher; we have sacrificed the man to the pin.

In some of the States of Western America, we are told of men who, by the very facts of their position, are compelled to clear their own ground, to sow and reap it with their own hands, to thatch and build their own cottages, and to break and shoe their own horses, and who give a great deal of attention, notwithstanding, to the consideration of great questions, commercial and political. This is, no doubt, an imperfect society, for everything is incomplete; and yet travellers tell us that there are nowhere such specimens of Humanity; that the men have not only large brains and large muscles, but both these joined together. On the one hand, then, we have a more complete society and a less complete individual; on the other hand, we have a more complete individual and a less complete society. This is the disadvantage, this is the high price we must pay for all civilization and progress; in the words of Tennyson, "The individual withers, and the world is more and more." And then, life is so divided; we have the dentist and the oculist, but they are only the dentist and the oculist; we have the clergyman and the farmer, but the farmer knows nothing of the clergyman; and is it not a charge brought against the clergy at this very moment that they are clergymen, and nothing more?

No man felt these two dangers more than Wordsworth felt them; he felt himself called upon to do battle against

the evils of his age ; he acknowledged that he had received a commission and consecration ; he was, as we have already heard, "a consecrated spirit": and yet he took a fair and just measure of his own powers ; he knew well that his work was not to be done on the platform, in the pulpit, or in the senate. He retired to his own mountains, and there, amidst the regenerating influences of nature, where all was real, he tried to discipline his own heart in order that he might be enabled to look calmly and truly on the manifold aspects of human life. And from that solitude there came from time to time a calm, clear voice, calling his countrymen back to simplicity and truth, proclaiming the dignity and the simplicity in feeling of our primitive nature, in opposition to the superstitious idolatry of wealth, proclaiming from time to time that a man's life consists not in the abundance of the things he possesses ; in opposition to the danger arising from divided employment and occupations, proclaiming the sanctity of each separate human soul, and asserting, in defiance of the manufacturer who called men "hands," that every man was not a "hand," but a living soul.

It was in this way that Wordsworth advocated the truth of poetry. He did a great, and high, and holy work, the value of which must not be calculated nor measured by his success, but by its truth. The work Wordsworth did—and I say it in all reverence—was the work which the Baptist did when he came to the pleasure-laden citizens of Jerusalem to work a reformation ; it was the work which Milton tried to do when he raised that clear, calm voice of his to call back his countrymen to simpler manners and to simpler laws. That was what Wordsworth did, or tried to do ; and the language in which he has described Milton might with great truth be applied to Wordsworth himself :—

“Milton ! thou should'st be living at this hour :
England hath need of thee : she is a fen
Of stagnant waters : altar, sword, and pen,
Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,
Have forfeited their ancient English dower
Of inward happiness. We are selfish men ;
Oh ! raise us up, return to us again ;
And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.
Thy soul was like a star, and dwelt apart :
Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea :
Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free.
So didst thou travel on life's common way,
In cheerful godliness ; and yet thy heart
The lowliest duties on herself did lay.”

I will now read to you one or two passages in which Wordsworth shows the power of this life of contemplation. The first I shall read is one written by Wordsworth soon after the Convention of Cintra. According to Wordsworth's view, England had been guilty in that Convention of great selfishness. It appeared to Wordsworth that, instead of using the opportunity given her to ransom Portugal and Spain, she had consulted her own selfishness, and allowed her enemy, the French, to escape with a retreat almost equal to victory. In consequence of this, Wordsworth wrote a tract, in one passage of which he defended himself for pretending to judge of such matters :—He says, “The evidence to which I have made appeal, in order to establish the truth, is not locked up in cabinets, but is accessible to all ; as it exists in the bosoms of men—in the appearances and intercourse of daily life—in the details of passing events—and in general history. And more especially is its right import within the reach of him who, taking no part in public measures, and having no concern in the changes of things but as they affect what is most precious in his country and

humanity, will doubtless be more alive to those genuine sensations which are the materials of sound judgment. Nor is it to be overlooked, that such a man may have more leisure (and probably will have a stronger inclination) to communicate with the records of past ages."

I will take one other passage, in which, judging of the affairs of Spain with almost perfect nicety, Wordsworth again appealed to the power and right given to him, by contemplation, to judge of such a subject:—

"Not mid the world's vain objects, that enslave
The free-born soul—that world whose vaunted skill
In selfish interest perverts the will,
Whose factions lead astray the wise and brave—
Not there; but in dark wood, and rocky cave,
And hollow vale, which foaming torrents fill
With omnipresent murmur as they rave
Down their steep beds that never shall be still:
Here, mighty Nature! in this school sublime,
I weigh the hopes and fears of suffering Spain,
For her consult the auguries of time;
And through the human heart explore my way,
And look and listen—gathering, whence I may,
Triumph and thoughts no bondage can restrain."

The second great feature in Wordsworth's life and history was his fidelity to himself. Early in life he felt himself a consecrated spirit, bound to be such, else sinning greatly. He said that he made no vows, but that, unknown to him, vows were made for him. Wordsworth felt that he had what we call in modern times a vocation or a mission, and no man was ever more true to his vocation than Wordsworth: he was not disobedient to the heavenly vision; he recognised the voice within him and obeyed it; and no wish for popularity, and no dazzling invitations to a brighter life,

could ever make him break his vows or leave his solitude. The generosity of a few private friends—Calvert, Beaumont, Lord Lonsdale—enabled him to live in retirement; but when he was afterwards invited to leave his seclusion for a town life he refused, because he felt that that would destroy the simplicity he was cultivating.

Wordsworth was no copyist; upon himself he formed himself. He took no model; he took the powers and light which were in him, and worked them out. This will account for what some writers called the fanatical egotism of the Lake writers. Egotism, if you will; but there is many a man who is wasting his energies who has, nevertheless, the power within him to be something, if he will only not try to be something which he cannot be—if he will only be content to be what he is within himself, instead of aiming at some model it is impossible for him ever to realise. Abstractedly, no doubt, the armour of the warrior was better than the sling of the shepherd; but for the shepherd the shepherd's sling was best. And so Wordsworth worked out his history, destiny, and life; and, after all, when you look at it, in his case, it was not egotism. Wordsworth said that he made no vows; vows were made for him. And here is the difference between the egotist and the humility of the great man: the egotist is ever speaking and thinking of that which belongs to himself alone and comes from himself; but the great man, when speaking of himself, or thinking of himself, is convinced that which is in him is not his own, but a Voice to which he must listen, and to which, at his peril, he must yield obedience. There has ever been to me something exceedingly sublime in the spectacle of Wordsworth, through obloquy, through long years, through contempt, still persevering in his calm, consistent course—something sublime in

those expressions which afterwards turned out to be a prophecy, in which, indifferent to present popularity, he looked towards the future. His friends, who loved him, his brothers, who adored him, were unsatisfied with the public opinion. "Make yourselves at rest respecting me," said Wordsworth; "I speak the truths the world must feel at last." There are not many passages in Wordsworth's works that bear upon his feelings during this time, and there is only one passage I will read to you now. It is that ode he wrote to Haydon :—

"High is our calling, friend !—Creative art
 (Whether the instrument of words she use,
 Or pencil pregnant with ethereal hues)
Demands the service of a mind and heart,
Though sensitive, yet, in their weakest part,
 Heroically fashioned—to infuse
 Faith in the whispers of the lonely muse,
While the whole world seems adverse to desert.
And, oh ! when nature sinks, as oft she may,
 Through long-lived pressure of obscure distress,
 Still to be strenuous for the bright reward,
And in the soul admit of no decay,
 Brook no continuance of weak-mindedness :
 Great is the glory, for the strife is hard !"

This brings me to consider Wordsworth in his success as a poet. The cause of Wordsworth, which was desperate once, is triumphant now ; and yet it is well to look back to fifty years ago, and to remember how it was with him then. Wordsworth's biographer informs us that between 1807 and 1815 there was not one edition of his works called for. The different reviews sneered at him, Jeffrey lashed him, Byron tried to annihilate him ; and it was in reference to some such attempt of Byron that Southey said, "He crush

the Excursion ! he might as well attempt to crush Mount Skiddaw !” It was about that time that Fox returned a calm, cold, unsympathising answer to the enclosure of a volume of Wordsworth’s poems which Wordsworth had sent ; and then also occurred one circumstance which is full of significance. Cottle, the bookseller, of Bristol, made over his stock and effects to the Messrs. Longman, and it was necessary to take an inventory of the stock, and in that inventory was found one volume noted down as worth “*nil.*” That volume contained the lyric poems of Wordsworth ; and it may be well, also, to say that it contained first of all Coleridge’s poem of the Ancient Mariner, and afterwards those exquisite lines of Wordsworth on Revisiting Tintern Abbey.

Thirty years after this, the then Prime Minister of England, Sir Robert Peel, in a letter full of dignified, and touching, and graceful feeling, proffered to Wordsworth the Laureateship of England ; acknowledging, in addition, that though he had mentioned the subject not to few, but to many persons, and not to men of small, but to men of great reputation, there was but one unanimous opinion, that the selection was the only one that could be made.

I remember myself one of the most public exhibitions of this change in public feeling. It was my lot, during a short university career, to witness a transition and a reaction, or revulsion, of public feeling, with respect to two great men whom I have already mentioned and contrasted. The first of these was one who was every inch a man—Arnold of Rugby. You will all recollect how in his earlier life Arnold was covered with suspicion and obloquy ; how the wise men of his day charged him with latitudinarianism, and I know not with how many other heresies. But the public

opinion altered, and he came to Oxford and read lectures on Modern History. Such a scene had not been seen in Oxford before. The lecture-room was too small ; all adjourned to the Oxford theatre ; and all that was most brilliant, all that was most wise and most distinguished, gathered together there. He walked up to the rostrum with a quiet step and manly dignity. Those who had loved him when all the world despised him, felt that, at last, the hour of their triumph had come. But there was something deeper than any personal triumph they could enjoy ; and those who saw him then will not soon forget the lesson read to them by his calm, dignified, simple step,—a lesson teaching them the utter worthlessness of unpopularity or of popularity as a test of manhood's worth.

The second occasion was when, in the same theatre, Wordsworth came forward to receive his honorary degree. Scarcely had his name been pronounced than from three thousand voices at once, there broke forth a burst of applause, echoed and taken up again and again when it seemed about to die away, and that thrice repeated—a cry in which

“ Old England's heart and voice unite,
Whether she hail the wine cup or the fight,
Or bid each hand be strong, or bid each heart be light.”

There were young eyes there, filled with an emotion of which they had no need to be ashamed, there were hearts beating with the proud feeling of triumph, that, at last, the world had recognised the merit of the man they had loved so long, and acknowledged as their teacher ; and yet, when that noise was protracted, there came a reaction in their feelings, and they began to perceive that *that* was not, after

all, the true reward and recompense for all that Wordsworth had done for England: it seemed as if all that noise was vulgarising the poet; it seemed more natural and desirable to think of him afar off in his simple dales and mountains, the high priest of Nature, weaving in honoured poverty his songs to liberty and truth, than to see him there clad in a scarlet robe and bespattered with applause. Two young men went home together, part of the way in silence, and one only gave expression to the feelings of the other when he quoted those well-known, trite, and often-quoted lines,—lines full of deepest truth—

“The self-approving hour whole worlds outweighs
Of stupid starers and of loud huzzas :
And more true joy Marcellus exiled feels
Than Cæsar with a senate at his heels.”

The last thing I shall remark on respecting Wordsworth's life was Wordsworth's consistency. I shall here quote a passage in which he alludes to the charge brought against him of having deserted his former opinions. “I should think that I had lived to little purpose if my notions on the subject of government had undergone no modification: my youth must, in that case, have been without enthusiasm, and my manhood endued with small capability of profiting by reflection. If I were addressing those who have dealt so liberally with the words renegade, apostate, &c., I should retort the charge upon them, and say, *you* have been deluded by *places* and *persons*, while I have stuck to *principles*.” It may appear to many persons a desperate thing to defend Wordsworth's consistency in the very teeth of facts; for it is unquestionable that in his early life Wordsworth was a Republican, and sympathised with the French Revolution,

and that in his later life he wrote lines of stern condemnation for its excesses. It is unquestionable, moreover, that in early life Wordsworth rebelled against anything like ecclesiastical discipline; that he could not even bear the morning and evening prayers at chapel, and yet that in later life he wrote a large number of Ecclesiastical sonnets, of which I will at present only quote one on Archbishop Laud—

“Prejudged by foes determined not to spare
An old weak man for vengeance thrown aside,
Laud, ‘in the painful art of dying’ tried,
(Like a poor bird entangled in a snare,
Whose heart still flutters, though his wings forbear
To stir in useless struggle), hath relied
On hope that conscious innocence supplied,
And in his prison breathes celestial air.
Why tarries then thy chariot! wherefore stay,
O Death! the ensanguined yet triumphant wheels,
Which thou preparest, full often to convey
(What time a state with maddening faction reels)
The saint or patriot to the world that heals
All wounds, all perturbations doth allay.”*

So that Wordsworth began as a Republican, and ended as a Tory; he began in defiance of everything ecclesiastical, and

* Wordsworth appended to this sonnet the following note, which is given entire to show the strength of his opinion on this subject:—

“In this age a word cannot be said in praise of Laud, or even in compassion for his fate, without incurring a charge of bigotry; but fearless of such imputation, I concur with Hume, ‘that it is sufficient for his vindication to observe that his errors were the most excusable of all those which prevailed during that zealous period.’ A key to the right understanding of those parts of his conduct that brought the most odium upon him in his own time, may be found in the following passage of his speech before the bar of the House of Peers: ‘Ever since I came in place, I have laboured nothing more than that the external publick worship of God, so much slighted in divers parts of this

ended as a High Churchman. This change has been viewed by persons of different parties with different sentiments. To some, as to the poet Shelley, it appeared an apostacy from the purity of his earlier principles; to others, as if the sacredness of his earlier principles had been ripened with the mellowed strength of manly life. Among these last is his biographer, Dr. Wordsworth; and it is curious to see what pains he has taken to point to some passage by which the evil of another might be modified—aiming at one great and chief object, namely, to prove that Wordsworth died a Tory and a High Churchman. Be it so : I am prepared to say that the inner life of Wordsworth was consistent. In order to prove this, let us bear in mind that there are two kinds of truth—the one is the truth of fact, the other is ideal truth : and these are not one, they are often opposite to each other. For example, when the agriculturist sees a small white almond-like thing rising from the ground, he calls that an oak; but that is not a truth of fact, it is an ideal truth. The oak is a large tree, with spreading branches, and leaves, and acorns; but that is only a thing an inch long, and imperceptible in all its development; yet the agriculturist sees in it the idea of what it shall be, and, if I may borrow a Scriptural phrase, he *imputes* to it the majesty, and excellence, and glory, that is to be hereafter.

Let us carry this principle into the change of Wordsworth's principles. In early life Wordsworth was a democrat : an

kingdom, might be preserved, and that with as much decency and uniformity as might be. For I evidently saw, that the public neglect of God's service in the outward face of it, and the nasty lying of many places dedicated to that service, *had almost cast a damp upon the true and inward worship of God, which, while we live in the body, needs external helps, and all little enough to keep it in any vigour.*"

admirer of the French Revolution: he sympathised deeply, manfully with the cause of the poor; he loved them, and desired their elevation. But he sympathised with them as the stately nobles of nature; he saw in them, not what they were, but what they might be; and in all Wordsworth's pedlars, and broom-gatherers, and gipsies, and wanderers, we have not bad men, defiled by crime; but there is, speaking through them all, the high, pure mind of Wordsworth. He simply exhibited his own humanity, which he felt and knew to be in them also. This is an ideal truth and not a truth of fact, and the idea is not what they were, but what they ought to be, and what they yet should be.

Let us, again, on the other hand, come to the question of Wordsworth's change into High Churchism and Toryism. And first, by the way, I would remark that there is another side of the truth Wordsworth put forward, which you will find in a poem familiar to most of you, in which Canning has given us the history of the "Needy Knife Grinder." A republican, in all the warmth of republican spirit, with his lips full of liberty, fraternity, and equality, sees approaching a man in rags—a poor wretched-looking being; and he instantly imagines that here is some victim to the oppression of the Poor Laws, the Game Laws, or of Tithes, or Taxation; but it turns out upon inquiry, that he has before him a man of bad life, of indolent and intemperate habits, who, in a fit of intoxication, has got into the wretched state in which he beholds him; and the indignation and confusion of our good republican are completed when the Needy Knife Grinder entreats that he would give him some small coin, in order that he might become drunk again. This is the other side of truth—the truth of fact—a low, and base, and vulgar truth. And, after all, when we come to examine

these, which is the higher truth?—is it higher to state things as they really are, or to state them as they ought to be?—to say that the lower classes are degraded, and evil, and base; or to say that there yet slumbers in them the aristocratic and the godlike, and that *that*, by the grace of God, shall one day be drawn forth? In early life, then, in all his most democratic feelings, Wordsworth was an aristocrat at heart.

And now we come to the other side of the question. And first, in reference to the term “High Churchism,” I do not use it in an offensive sense. If there are any persons here holding High Church views, I implore them to believe that, although I am not a High Churchman myself—far from it—I can yet sympathise with them in all their manliness and high-mindedness; and recognise much in them that is pure and aspiring. If, therefore, I now give my own definition of High Churchism, let them not be offended. There are, then, two things opposite to each other; the one is Pantheism, the other is High Churchism. Pantheism is a tendency to see the godlike everywhere, the personal God nowhere. The other is the tendency to localise the personal Deity in certain places, certain times, and certain acts; certain places called consecrated churches; certain times called fast-days, and so forth; certain acts, called acts of ecclesiastical life, in certain persons, called consecrated priests. These two things, you will observe, are opposed to each other—diametrically opposed. Now, it is a strange and remarkable fact, that Wordsworth has been charged with both these things; by some he has been charged with Pantheism, and by others with what we call High Churchism. In reference to Pantheism, in order that those who are not familiar with the word may understand it, I will quote one or two passages from Wordsworth. The first, which occurs

in the sonnets, I have read. In that it will be seen that Wordsworth speaks of the force of Nature as if that were the only living Soul of the world. I will take another passage which occurs in the well-known lines on Revisiting Tintern Abbey:—

“And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts ; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean, and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man :
A Motion and a Spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things.”

In these words, grand and magnificent as they are, we have the very germ of Pantheism. But now, in looking at one of these classes of passages, we must ever remember to modify it by the other. When Wordsworth spoke as a High Churchman, we must remember that he was the very same man who spoke of the Living Being that created the universe, as “A Motion and a Spirit that impels all thinking things”; and when, on the other hand, he uses language which seems to pass almost into Pantheism, we must remember that he was the same man who wrote the Ecclesiastical sonnets, and who spoke of a personal and localized Deity.

And what if it be true,—and true it is,—that the earlier part of Wordsworth’s life was characterised by the predominancy of one of these feelings, and the later part by the other—is there anything there that is unnatural or inconsistent? Is it unnatural if the mind of a man progresses from the vague transcendental down towards the personal? Is there anything inconsistent in the great truth, that the

mind of man, after having wandered in the outer confines of the circumference of this universe, should at last seek its home and find its blessedness in the rest of a personal centre? Now, with respect to the other point, namely, Wordsworth's Toryism, or Conservatism—call it what you will: it does not matter whether I am now addressing Tories or Radicals; since we are speaking of great principles, we will have done with names. I will read you a passage in which Wordsworth speaks of England:—

“ Hail to the crown by freedom shaped—to gird
An English sovereign's brow ! and to the throne
Whereon he sits. Whose deep foundations lie
In veneration and the people's love ;
Whose steps are equity, whose seal is law.”

Now, the veriest democrat can only object to this as a matter of fact, and will probably say, “ If this be England, I would desire to preserve her as she is ; but because I do not believe it, I desire to alter her : in heart and in idea we are one, the only point on which we differ is the point of historical fact.” I say, therefore, that in Wordsworth's most democratic days he was aristocratic in heart ; and in his most aristocratic days he had all that was most generous, and all that was most aspiring in the democratic mind. I now come rapidly towards the conclusion ; but having said what I have, it is necessary that I should complete the picture by giving you an idea of the patriotism in Wordsworth : that intense and deep love for England, in which aristocrat and democrat are blended in the formation of one high-minded man. I will read a passage showing Wordsworth's love for his country :—

“ When I have borne in memory what has tamed
Great nations, how ennobling thoughts depart
When men change swords for ledgers, and desert
The student’s bower for gold, some fears unnamed
I had, my country !—am I to be blamed,
Now when I think of thee, and what thou art,
Verily in the bottom of my heart,
Of those unfilial fears I am ashamed.
For dearly must we prize thee ; we who find
In thee a bulwark for the cause of men ;
And I by my affection was beguiled :
What wonder if a poet now and then,
Among the many movements of his mind
Felt for thee as a lover or a child ? ”

I must preface the next sonnet I have to read, by reminding you, that it was written at a period when a French invasion was expected. It is a very hard and difficult thing for us in the present day, broken as we are into so many factions, to conceive the united enthusiasm which stirred the heart of England in those days, when every moment the invasion of the great conqueror of Europe was possible. The fleets of England swept the seas ; on every hill the signal beacons blazed ; 420,000 men were in arms ; the service of the church was liable to be interrupted by the clang of arms upon the pavement ; every village churchyard was converted into a parade-ground ; every boy felt as if there were strength, even in his puny arm, to strike a blow in defence of the cause of his country ; every man, excepting when he thought of the women of his country, was longing for the time to come, when it should be seen with what a strength, with what a majesty a soldier fought, when he was fighting in the magnificent and awful cause of his altar and his hearth.

The moment was like that of the deep silence which

precedes a thunder-storm, when every breath is hushed, and every separate dried leaf, as it falls through the boughs, is heard tinkling, tinkling down through the branches, from branch to branch; when men's breath was held; when men's blood beat thick in their hearts, as if they were waiting in solemn and grand, but not in painful—rather in triumphant—expectation for the moment when the storm should break, and the French cry of “Glory” should be thundered back again by England's sublimer battle-cry of “Duty!” It was at this time that Wordsworth's sonnet appeared:—

“It is not to be thought of that the flood
 Of British freedom which to the open sea
 Of the world's praise, from dark antiquity
 Hath flowed, with ‘pomp of waters unwithstood,’
 Roused though it be full often to a mood
 Which spurns the check of salutary bands,
 That this most famous stream in bogs and sands
 Should perish! and to evil and to good
 Be lost for ever. In our halls is hung
 Armoury of the invincible Knights of old:
 We must be free or die, who speak the tongue
 That Shakspeare spake; the faith and morals hold
 Which Milton held. In everything we are sprung
 Of earth's first blood, have titles manifold.”

In the next passage I have to bring before you I will remind you of some other facts. The sonnet is addressed to the men of Kent. Now, there is a difference between the Kentish men and the men of Kent. The Kentish men are simply the inhabitants of the county of Kent. The “Men of Kent” is a technical expression applied to the inhabitants of that part of Kent who were never subdued in the Norman invasion, and who obtained glorious terms for

themselves, on capitulation, receiving the confirmation of their own charters ; so that until very recently—if not at present—they were still in possession of the custom called Gavelkind, by which the sons inherited, not unequally, the eldest taking precedence, but they all taking share and share alike. It was to the “Men of Kent,” the inhabitants of that part of the county nearest to the neighbouring land of France, that Wordsworth addressed this sonnet :—

“ Vanguard of Liberty, ye Men of Kent,
Ye children of a soil that doth advance
Her haughty brow against the coast of France,
Now is the time to prove your hardiment !
To France be words of invitation sent !
They from their fields can see the countenance
Of your fierce war, may ken the glittering lance,
And hear you shouting forth your brave intent.
Left single, in bold parley, ye, of yore,
Did from the Norman win a gallant wreath ;
Confirmed the charters that were yours before ;—
No parleying now ! In Britain is one breath,
We all are with you now from shore to shore :—
Ye men of Kent, 'tis victory or death ! ”

In this age of cosmopolitanism, when we are, forsooth, too much philanthropists to be patriots ; when any deep and strong emotion of love to our country is reckoned as nothing more than the sacredness of the schoolboy's affection ; when our young people who have travelled can find no words more capable of expressing their contempt than these—“It is so English” ; it does the heart good to read these firm and pure, and true and manly words, issuing from the lips of one who was not ashamed to love his country with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his mind, and with all his strength : a man whose every word and every thought, and every act, were the words, and thoughts, and acts, of a manly, true-spirited, high-minded Englishman !

A SPEECH

*Delivered at the Town Hall, Brighton, April 24th, 1849,
at a Meeting of the Inhabitants, called by the
Early Closing Association, presided over by the
Bishop of Chichester.*

THE Resolution which has been put into my hands is—"That this meeting, believing that an earlier and more uniform hour of suspension of business would give time to all engaged therein for moral and intellectual improvement, would recommend to all tradesmen the hour of eight o'clock as the hour of closing throughout the year; and pledges itself to make purchases before eight o'clock in the evenings, and to request their servants to do the same."

There is a vast difference between that which is theoretically desirable, and that which is practically possible. Our enthusiasm is frequently corrected by experience. It throws too wild, too sanguine, a hope on the future. But difficulties arise; and that which at first seemed easy, turns out to be at last an impossibility. It is in almost every undertaking as it is in life. The lesson we have to learn in life is the same lesson which we have to learn in travelling through a mountainous country. The first lesson is, to estimate distances. The traveller sees the mountain summit sparkling in the

evening sun, apparently close above his head ; and he resolves that the next morning he will ascend that mountain, and come down again before breakfast. But he finds next day a long three miles between himself and the mountain foot ; and that when he has arrived there it takes five or six hours to ascend, and half that time to come back again ; and it is well if he returns before nightfall. It is precisely the same with every human undertaking. Our first idea is very different from that which attainment teaches us. We set out with brilliant expectations ; we find them very slow in realising themselves. And so life assumes, by degrees, a soberer and a sadder hue. We find that between our ideal and its attainment there is an immense interval. That which seemed to be the work of days we find to be the work of months ; that which seemed to be the work of years turns out to be the work of centuries. And so, step by step, man is disenchanted—led on by hopes of a bright future which is never realised *here*. I believe that the lesson of all experience and of all life is this :—to expect very little, for there is but little of human expectation to be attained ; to sow abundantly, and to be satisfied with a very small harvest. Happy is the man not thoroughly broken by disappointment ! Happy is that man ! for the object of this training is, not to discourage him, but that he may work more calmly, with less of fitful enthusiasm—with steady gaze fixed on the Hereafter ! I make these observations, because they are peculiarly applicable to the subject in hand. This subject of Early Closing has been taken up very warmly at first by many people, who have cooled down, and have afterwards let it drop. Two or three years ago there was a large meeting in this town for the same purpose as this one. Some of those who were then enthusiastic and earnest have by degrees

become lukewarm and despondent. Their expectations have not been realised ; much that was hoped for has not been attained ; there have been many difficulties which were not anticipated. And so the result has been, that they have fallen back into coldness and indifference. It is for this reason that I think the tone we should adopt this evening should be calm and sober.

It is exceedingly easy to paint this subject in most glowing colours. It is the easiest thing in the world to represent the young men as craving for intellectual knowledge, as suffering under physical difficulties, as eager for, and requiring moral improvement. It is exceedingly easy to do all this, because there is a great deal of truth in it. It is exceedingly easy, moreover, because it is popular. But I am not here to say that which is popular ; but that which is true. I am not here to say that which shall win a cheer ; but to say that which shall be practical and useful. We are met here to-night for two purposes. To resolve that "an earlier and more uniform hour of suspension of business would give time to all engaged therein for moral and intellectual improvement"; and that the meeting "recommends to all tradesmen the hour of eight o'clock as the hour of closing throughout the year, and pledges itself to make purchases accordingly." The subject is complicated with difficulties ; and although it would be exceedingly easy to speak in denunciation of those opposed to this movement of Early Closing, I feel there is something to be said on both sides of the question ; and therefore I ask the meeting to listen to me dispassionately.

In considering this question, we discern three things : the desirable, the difficult, the possible.

With regard to the desirable, I believe it will be generally admitted that it is desirable for business to be carried on

within fewer hours. There is a great difference between the way in which this question is to be looked at, as a manufacturing, and as a trading question. The question touching hours in the factory does not hold good as to the shop. The object of the factory is to produce ; and it may be argued that the work done in twelve hours cannot be done in ten. It is not true that this argument can hold with respect to trade. In trade the object is, not to produce materials, but to serve customers ; and if you take the shops in which most work is done, there is not one in which there cannot be found five minutes, ten minutes, half-hours, hours, in which all employed are waiting for customers. Let those five minutes and half-hours be added up, and they will more than cover the time taken in serving after any given hour, say seven or eight o'clock. If those customers had come in before nine or ten, there is not one in this meeting who will not acknowledge there were people and time enough to serve them. Then all of us will agree in the possibility that the work may be done in less time. That, if it can be done in less time, it should be done, I think will also be agreed ; and the resolution furnishes us with the reasons—"that an earlier and more uniform hour of suspension of business would give time to all engaged therein for moral and intellectual improvement."

Into the physical necessity for this early closing I shall not enter. It is a medical question, and I believe that members of the medical profession, who will address you, will touch on this with more effect than I could do. I ask no further proof of the physical necessity which exists, than to see the working man and the assistant in the shop, in their Sunday walk. There is in their gait a languor and an effeminacy which should not belong to Englishmen. In the second place, this matter is necessary for the sake of

intellectual improvement. This age has been often called the age of the aristocracy of wealth. The aristocracy of birth is now much passed by. We are living in an age in which gold is worshipped. In former ages, "virtue" was "valour." In Italy, in the present day, the word "virtù," applied to a man, means "taste in amassing curiosities." In England we speak of the worth of a man as proportioned by the amount of gold which he has been enabled to gather round him as a kind of accretion. And, therefore, it is a matter of rejoicing for me to see a meeting which protests against a principle such as this. This meeting proclaims, in the face of the day, that there is something more sublime in man than the worship of gold. It maintains that there is in the nature of man, that which requires and demands intellectual and moral improvement.

Now, with regard to the intellectual improvement, I shall not press it too much. It is perfectly possible that it may be exaggerated. I will not say that all these young men are craving intellectual knowledge. The young men in the trading classes are like the young men in the upper classes; and I suppose that if one out of twenty in either class is earnestly desirous of this intellectual knowledge, it is a large average. I will grant there is not a difficulty in the way of obtaining this knowledge that may not be surmounted. Men borne down by defects of position and education have achieved for themselves intellectual emancipation. Ferguson, Watt, and Franklin are noble examples of this. There are men who seem to be born intellectual heroes; men born to cut their way through any obstacles, men who only require to meet difficulties in their way, and those difficulties will be surmounted. They are like the trees on the mountain that require no more than a bare covering

of soil on the rock to strike their roots firmly down ; nothing more than the clear, serene, thin air of heaven to throw abroad their branches in. These are intellectual giants; and they would acquire knowledge under any circumstances; it is impossible to crush them. But it is not for men like these that I have to plead. The mass of men are not the intellectual giants: they are rather the humble and the feeble; the exotic, that require care and culture. They require to be fostered, to be placed on the sunny side of the hill. Give them opportunities, give them time; and then it will be found, not that they will attain grand intellectual dimensions, but they will achieve something like intellectual respectability. And I desire to mention one circumstance which seems to be a strong corroboration of this fact. Some time ago the drapers of this town resolved on closing at an earlier hour; and about the same time the Brighton ATHENÆUM was established, in order that the young men might have an opportunity of intellectual cultivation; many young men availed themselves of those opportunities. From causes into which I will not now enter, the rule of Early Closing was obliged to be infringed. Ask you the result? At this time the Athenæum contained something like 600 or 700 members. There are about 200 assistants, I am told, engaged in the Drapery trade in this town; and of these 60 were members of the Athenæum, all but ten withdrew. I will not press too much on this; I know in some cases there were rooms provided by employers, and libraries furnished, and that these withdrew them from the Athenæum; but I hold the case indisputably to be this, that if there be a time allowed for cultivation of the mind, there is on the part of the young men a real wish to avail themselves of it.

In the next place, this resolution maintains that Early

Closing is necessary for "moral improvement." Early closing is necessary for leisure. Man was not made to divide his time between Study and Work. Besides that, there must be Recreation. He who made the eye, spread around us this world of beauty, and caused the contemplation of it to be accompanied by the feeling of intense enjoyment;—He who threw into the heart the power of domestic affection, gave it delight in domestic sympathy;—He who led His disciples into the desert to "rest awhile," made man for recreation. And, therefore, I am prepared to take it on the lowest ground. The young men require, not merely mental instruction, but time for pleasure, for social enjoyment, for recreation. It is partly for this purpose the Sabbath is necessary for man. It is necessary, in the first place, to nurse the Human; and, in the second, to nurse the Divine within him. In the first to give to man recreation, and in that he shares with the lowest animals; in the second, the cultivation which should nurse the Divine within him. You have in the first, necessity for Rest; in the second, necessity for Worship. It is the result of the late closing to make the Sabbath-day simply and solely a day of rest, and not of holiness. It may be well to speak of the desecration of the Sabbath-day. To say the trains shall not run on Sundays; to say the citizens of London shall not leave their homes, nor the artizan go out of Brighton into the country;—it is easy to say this. But we have no right to say that if a man has not time for rest in the week, he shall not take it on the Sabbath.

Once more. This Early Closing is wanted for moral improvement. For the sake of "work," I draw a distinction between it and "occupation." "Occupation" is not "work." The object, the intention of occupation is a blessed one. It saves the mind from corrupting and

wearing out itself. The man who has nothing to do is a most wretched character. He rises in the morning, with fifteen hours before him, in which he makes society wretched and himself wretched also. There is something else implied in "work." "Work" is productive. It produces something; it gives to a man's character self-dependence and inward strength. Boswell, with his singular simplicity, tells us of an occasion in which he was overtaken by a storm; and he relates that he went about asking question after question of the sailors, interrupting every man in his duty, till at last a sailor put a rope in his hand, and said, "We are in danger, and the safety of the vessel depends on this being held with great force." Occupied in this way, he forgot his fears, and the storm passed over. He had all the while been pulling a useless rope. His was "occupation"; the sailor's "work" was productive. The artizan is a man engaged in work; he is a man who either cultivates the soil, and produces food for man to live upon, or he takes the raw material, and makes furniture, and all things necessary for life. The shopkeeper has not "work," but "occupation"; for no man will tell us that the man engaged all day long in folding and unfolding ribbons, showing them in proper lights, and putting them across the counter—no one will tell us he has been engaged in "work": he has in "occupation." It has saved himself and society from the wretchedness cast upon idleness. Therefore we claim these hours, that young men may exchange "occupation" for "work." Young men! For what purpose do you ask early hours? Is it for leisure only? Is it to escape from occupation? If that be all, Brighton is being stirred for a very small cause; whereas the young men who came to me as a deputation spoke of something far higher. They asked

for time, not to give it to leisure only, not to give it to social enjoyment only, but to work, to discipline their minds, to do the great duty God has given them to do on earth, that their soul, and body, and spirit, might be presented perfect before their Maker.

And now I come to the second part of what I have to say. Having spoken of the "desirable," I pass on to the "difficult." And the first difficulty arises from the peculiar circumstance of Brighton. Brighton is not a manufacturing town ; neither is it a commercial town. Brighton is a place of enjoyment for strangers. Something like one-third or one-fourth will be found not to be residents, but extraneous of the population. Every Saturday London pours out thousands to take advantage of the sea air. Let any man go to the railway station, and he will be astonished to see the mass of human beings flocking into the town. What is the result? Numbers come down by the last train. They go to the hotels and lodging-houses, and there are articles of consumption wanted. They send out—they must send out—for their provisions ; and then, if a tradesman refuses to sell, one difficulty is, that he may have lost a customer for life. There is another difficulty. They go through the place—through the principal streets of the town ; and then, every tradesman knows that, during the last two hours of the day, sauntering about there, there are numbers of people who will be induced to go into the shops and purchase the goods which are seen in the brilliantly-lighted windows ; and it requires a strong amount of principle for the master tradesman to say he will sacrifice a profit, which, if he does, he will never have in any other way.

Again. The town is the resort of the wealthy—of the aristocracy. There is a difference between this town and

manufacturing towns on that account. I have inquired, and I find that, in Sheffield, and Birmingham, and Liverpool, and most places of that kind, the early closing is easily carried out, and carried out at even earlier hours than seven; for in manufacturing towns life is of a different description. There all men play into each other's hands—all understand each other's necessities. But, at Brighton and Cheltenham, there is a peculiar difficulty; and the difficulty arises partly from this—that the inhabitants are the wealthy. Here, much is different; few understand one another; and when we come to inquire, we find that it is not the purchases of the rich themselves that form the great staple in the occupation of these late hours, but it is the servants of the rich classes. And here I would say a word to mistresses on a subject of which they can necessarily know nothing. I made it my business to make inquiries of the police, and the information given to me by them was of the most appalling character, because it told a sad tale of the result of that which is done in perfect ignorance. When the female servant is sent out at night, the mistress knows not the consequences, nor the sin and misery, which often come from female servants going out at late hours to purchase. I do not say this in a spirit of indignation against those mistresses and employers. It is simply ignorance on their part, not hard-heartedness. But it is a thing to impress upon ourselves and others, that there is

“An evil wrought by want of thought,
As well as want of heart.”

I pass on to another difficulty; and that arises from the deterioration of the character of the young men themselves. Those who are present now are not the master-tradesmen,

or I would take a different course. Those present now are most anxious that the masters should concede this boon of early closing; and therefore I will say, not that which may be popular, but that which may be calculated to do good. In the first place, there is a feeling widely existing, that the use made of this privilege is not what it ought to have been. All the returns of your libraries show how few works of information are read—how many of fiction. More than that, the police tell us that the cigar-shop reaps a terrible harvest out of the wages of the young men; that the billiard-table is at work; that the public-houses, and houses worse than they, are full. I therefore press this matter urgently on the young men. Better far that the hours of business should even be extended, than that extra hours should be gained for licentiousness (so falsely called pleasure), or for mere idleness, which is the grave of a living man. Better, far! for your whole being, physical, moral, and intellectual. Beware, too, of eye-service, for I have it from the master of some of the men that he has lost confidence in them in respect of their attention to business when not overlooked. The way in which your leaders have acted, and the sentiments they have expressed on this subject, do them great honour. And if the young men used the privilege of early closing on the principle set forth by their leaders, the last difficulty will vanish away.

There is, however, a difficulty in this respect, that it is hardly possible to legislate in an artificial manner. We desire that the shops should be closed at eight. This law, like other laws, will be of advantage, if it be in accordance with the feeling produced already in society; but, if it be super-imposed on society, it must fail. Everything of legislation coercive, and not expressive of the mind and desire

of Society, must fail. When England tried to force her Episcopacy on Scotland, the result was, that the Episcopacy was thrown off, never probably to be placed in power there again. When England tried to force Protestantism on Ireland, compulsorily, the result was, that Roman Catholicism became the religion of the land. So with private individuals. The law can never be compulsorily enforced. We must proceed from that which is within to that which is without ; and not from that which is without to that which is within. A man of disorderly habits tries to regulate himself by an outward rule ; and he sits down and maps out his time and proposes a plan of action, and he has it on his paper beautifully arranged, the books he will read and the acts he will do. Go to him in three months and ask him the result. It is not reality. It is Law, not Spirit ; therefore the thing has failed. Therefore do I protest most earnestly against any attempt to carry this early closing movement by coercion. I protest against anything like dictation to the master-tradesmen. I protest against anything like an attempt at compulsion. It was said to me a few days ago, that this was a conspiracy against the masters. We repel that, in the name of the young men ; we protest against it ; we protest against everything by which the masters may be held up to ridicule ; and, with just as much indignation as I should protest against carrying the point by breaking windows in the street, I protest against any attempt to carry out the principle of exclusive dealing. I hold in my hands the report of a recent meeting in favour of exclusive dealing. It was with much regret that I read it.

I protest most strongly against this principle. In the first place, because it makes that prominent which ought to be subordinate. It is quite sufficient ground for dealing

with a tradesman, that he is moral, that his wares are good ; but when we take a ground such as this, that though he be a moral and good man, and sells goods better than his neighbours, because he does not choose to do what we do, we will not deal with him, we make that prominent which ought to be subordinate. Again, I protest against it because it is illiberal. There are men who hold—I believe mistakenly—that such a measure as this of Early Closing would be injurious to the young men and to society. We believe they are wrong, but it is their opinion ; and I ask on what possible ground men can come forward and demand of us that we should deal exclusively, because a man does not hold our views on the subject, and then complain of us if we deal exclusively with those who hold our own political, or our own ecclesiastical views ?

And now, to pass briefly to the remainder of what I have to say. All at present shows a difficulty ; but nothing which is impracticable. Let it be clearly understood that in all those difficulties there is not one that *ought* to stand in the way of Early Closing ; and I have a pleasure in proposing this resolution, because the language it uses is the language not of coercion, nor of dictation, but of recommendation. It pledges us to recommend to all tradesmen the adoption of eight o'clock as the hour of closing. There are master-tradesmen who do their duty by their assistants. There are some who look on their young men as objects committed by God to their charge, and desire to treat them as their children. And there are master-tradesmen who open for their young men rooms, and have lectures, and all kinds of instruction. Let us have but a hundred such masters, and the whole question of Early Closing is safe.

It is possible and practicable to force this question on

the attention of the community. We pledge ourselves in this resolution to do all we can to promote so desirable an object, by making all purchases before the evening, and requesting the heads of establishments to do the same. Let us not pledge ourselves in a moment of enthusiasm. When the blood burns, we know how prodigally the tongue vows. It is easy in enthusiastic moments to make a pledge ; but let us pledge ourselves to endeavour to understand the immense importance of this subject, and to act out our convictions fully and completely. Let us understand that there are higher aims than merely obtaining Early Closing. What we want is, not to get a stringent law to carry out our own principles, but to promote a pervading spirit of good feeling through all classes ; in one word, to feel that "we are members one of another."

SPEECH

Delivered at a Meeting of the Brighton District Association for Improving the Dwellings of the Industrious Classes, held at the Pavilion, Brighton, November 25th, 1852.

THE Rev. F. W. Robertson moved,—“That this meeting hears with satisfaction the success which has attended the establishment of the Brighton Branch of the Metropolitan Association for Improving the Dwellings of the Industrious Classes, and is of opinion that the extension of the undertaking will be the means of conferring more extensively essential benefit on the social and moral condition of the working classes of the town of Brighton: and that such extension will be more effectually promoted by obtaining an increase in the number of shares, which it pledges itself to use its best exertions to effect.”

It is to one sentence, alone, of this resolution that I shall direct a few observations: that in which we say that “this will be the means of conferring more extensively essential benefit on the social and moral condition of the working classes of the town of Brighton.” The great object for which institutions, such as this, are established is to procure

for the working classes a "*Home*." To explain the meaning of this word is unnecessary ; before an English audience it is superfluous. There is not one present to-day who has not been, even from childhood, familiar with all those sacred associations which God has thrown in such profusion around the precincts of Home ; but to the great majority of the poor in this country, there is no such thing as Home. We dare not, cannot say, that those two small rooms in which a whole family are huddled up together, those two rooms which serve for kitchen, sleeping-room, parlour, and for everything, in which there are no conveniences and no comforts, and in which, when a man or a child may be dying, he would be disturbed by the necessary noise and bustle of the family—we dare not, except in mockery, call that, in a Christian land, a "*Home*."

Yet we too often ignore this condition of the poor man's dwelling, and hence arise many practical fallacies. I will mention but one : the mistake with respect to the possibility of the poor man spending the Lord's-day as he should. This subject has occupied much attention in this country. There has been a project recently set on foot by a large number of philanthropists, and a large number of speculators, in different parts of the country, to establish edifices or buildings in which the poor shall have recreation, pleasure, and instruction ; and some of these, one especially, the importance of which overrides all the others, it has been proposed to open on the Lord's-day, and that too with the sanction of the Government. This has been met by a very large proportion of the religious inhabitants of this country with great dismay and indignation. It has appeared to them that this is a desecration of the Lord's-day, a breaking of the covenant between God and His people. They have drawn most

touching pictures of the poor man spending his Sabbath evenings surrounded by his family, and with the Bible open before him. I am not about to pronounce any opinion with respect to the view entertained among religious people on this subject. There are two views entertained on this question, and both these ought, in all Christian consistency, to be allowed to those who hold them. Some believe that the Sabbath, the Jewish Sabbath, if not in its integrity and strictness, at all events with a certain degree of modified strictness, accordant with the superior genius of Christianity, should be observed. Some, on the other hand, believe that the Jewish Sabbath is altogether abrogated ; that the Lord's-day is not the same thing ; that it did not arise out of it, nor was it a transfer of one day to another, but that what has succeeded the Jewish Sabbath is not what we call the Lord's-day ; that it is not one day alone that the Christian is to observe, but a grander, larger, more spiritual day, the day of the whole life, the sanctification of the whole life of man, to be yielded to God, as purchased by Christ. With respect to the truth of these two conflicting opinions, we have nothing, at present, to do. All we have to consider is, how far we can with any consistency agree upon this point. We are all agreed on this, that the most blessed institution which has descended to us from our forefathers is the Christian Lord's-day. All, I believe, are agreed in this : that it is deeply-rooted as an institution in the necessities of our human nature : and that to give up the Lord's-day merely to the physical or intellectual needs of man will be utterly insufficient, and that the higher and truer half of man, that which makes him a spiritual creature, being uncared for, the Sabbath will be but a very imperfect day of rest. We are all agreed also in an earnest resolve to set our faces

against those views, now so common, which identify the Christianising of the population with the humanising of the population. We believe that to humanise is one thing ; that to Christianise is another thing. We believe that pictures, statues, music, æsthetics, tropical plants, and all the other contents and adjuncts of these places, valuable as they are in humanising, are utterly insufficient to produce the Christianity of the Cross. We are all agreed in believing that there is a distinction between æsthetics and religious worship, between the worship of the Beautiful and the worship of Holiness. We are, therefore, all agreed in an earnest desire that, among all classes of the country, there should be a more religious, pure, and holy observance of the Lord's-day. But now, let me ask the question, With what consistency can we demand of the poor man that he shall have no recreation of an out-doors kind, if we have done nothing to provide for him a *home* within doors, wherein to spend the Christian Sabbath ?

It was only yesterday that I conversed with an intelligent working man in this town, and the man expressed in very striking language the bitter indignation which was felt by his class towards those who were, as he said, in a bigoted way endeavouring to rob them of their Sabbath. I trust that I convinced him, I tried at all events with all my heart to convince him, that it was not bigotry in those who tried to take from the working men their Sabbath ; but I am not sure that I convinced the man that there was not great ignorance on the part of those persons with regard to the necessities of the poor. It seems, therefore, that the only true and proper answer we can make to the poor man when he expresses indignation at being robbed of his out-door Sabbath is by an institution such as this, which would give

him a home wherein to spend an in-door Sabbath. Every institution of this kind seems to tell of a new era in the Human Race and of the progress of civilization. What is the true characteristic of the present age? It is a disposition to acknowledge the importance and the value of that which appears to be small and insignificant. When Mr. Wordsworth announced this as the great truth and the great principle of all the poetry of life, he was met with a universal shout of laughter; but the spirit of the remark has since permeated all society, and all our literature. It is the characteristic of the age—it is the characteristic of its literature. The most popular and the most vigorous of the writers of this day arose first to eminence by drawing the attention of the country to the modes of thinking, the feeling, the living, and even the slang of the lower classes: and that book which has occupied and is still occupying the attention both of Europe and America,*—to what is owing its singular power, but to the thrilling interest it has thrown around the thought, that in the negro himself there is a common humanity with our own—in the lowest of the species something that agrees even with the highest! It must be an era marking a changed state of things, when princes and nobles, instead of occupying their time with battles and tournaments, are occupied with subjects such as Improving the Dwellings of the Poor, and the construction of Baths and Washhouses. This, I think, must prove that we have arrived at a state of things in which the smallest, the minutest atoms of the species become of importance: when members of the Government are absolutely not ashamed to give lectures, and to enlighten the people on the necessity of drainage and

* "Uncle Tom's Cabin."

sanitary regulations—surely this is significant. And in all this, we have, I think, the very genius and spirit of Christianity; we have that which, 1,800 years ago, was declared when an Apostle told us, “Nay, more, those members of the body which seem to be more feeble are necessary; and those members of the body which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour.”

In that book to which I have already adverted, there is an incident related which struck me as it were with a flush of surprise, because it brought a well-known and little thought-of passage of Scripture under notice with new associations. It is that in which two adults are represented as gazing on the play of two young children. One of the children was a female slave; the other, the daughter of the lady of the mansion. Of the adults, one was a man whose feelings, as is but too commonly the case, were far beyond his attainments, his aspirations beyond his will. He had consequently sunk down into that state of mere sentimentalism, which is inseparably connected with thinking well and not doing well, and he is represented as contented with, from time to time, an indignant and sarcastic expression on the inconsistency of those around him. The other was a lady whose whole life had been spent in the acquisition of maxims, but who had not been able to live deeply in the spirit of those maxims. These children were at play, and one was seen to throw her arms around the other; and that other, who had evaded all attempts to soften, or to tame, was melted by the tenderness of her white sister; and an expression burst from the lips of the lady to the effect, that *now* she understood the deep meaning and spirit there was in the passage of Scripture, “He laid His hands upon them, and healed them.” She had up to this time been uttering

maxims with regard to the equality of the human race ; but she had not "*laid her hands*" upon the negroes. I do not say but that this is fanciful ; yet it strikes at the deep root of it all, for the great difference between His love of the human race and ours, the great difference in the way He stated the Brotherhood of the Race is this, that His was real, and true, and deep, and full of kindly sympathy. It was not standing apart from them : but mixing with them, and being one with them ; and therefore it is, that what we are *now* to do is, to put *our* hands on our fellow-men, and touch the littleness and vulgarities of their daily life. It is just that which this institution desires to do, in building for them a Home. It has long appeared to me that Christianity is a true medium between those two opposite extremes, Spiritualism and Socialism. The spiritualist maintains that man may make his circumstances, and so it takes no account whatsoever of the circumstances by which the man may be surrounded ; it believes that the Spirit, which is of God, may rise above those circumstances. On the other hand, it is a great maxim of Socialism that circumstances make the man. And so, the very author of Socialism tells us that, if we have efficient laws and altered Social regulations, we shall have true and right men ; and if we will but take away all the temptations to vice, we shall have no vice. These are the two extreme systems ; Christianity does not steer the *via media* between these two extremes—no *truth* does. Christianity states the truth, by stating both extremes. It is the spirit of Christianity, that man makes his circumstances, and, besides, that the circumstances make the man. The Scriptures, interested principally with our spiritual nature, are also interested with our physical nature ; and the Redeemer of the soul is declared to be the Saviour also of the body.

It appears to me that the grand consummation, for which all are waiting, the Kingdom of Christ set up on earth, never can be established till we have reached this conviction : and all the outer and inner life must work together, until we have done all that in us lies, not only to preach and teach the truth, but to take away the hindrances which stand in the way of truth. And what is the life of the poor man in his cottage ?

Before a mixed audience, I cannot go deeply into the details of this. I have seen a family of nine, father and mother, grown-up sons and daughters, with but one sleeping-room, and in that sleeping-room only two beds. I will not go into the results : before a Christian assembly they are not to be named. But what is Purity, what is Modesty, what is the Christian Gospel preached to such a family as that ? It may appear to some, that to have gone into all these large principles is something like magniloquence ; for, after all, when we speak of what we have done, we have only built apartments for ten families and seven single persons. But the rest is to come ; and it is a great thing to have established a standard, to have set up before our poorer brethren a specimen of a higher and better mode of living. Political economists say, the evil of the country is over population consequent on improvident marriages. This is partly true, but their remedy is insufficient. There is no difficulty in preventing improvident marriages among the upper classes ; and for this reason—they know what comfort is—and they will not, except there is very small self-control, marry and sink in the scale of society. But the poor man often feels that he can sink no lower. Why then, he might ask himself, should I not marry ? And when this morning I saw the Building in Church Street, with every window curtained, and the whole

aspect so different from the buildings around, the thought suggested itself to my mind, and it must also have suggested itself to the minds of those who accompanied me,—It is impossible that those who live in this locality, and look at this building, should be satisfied with the state in which they are now living. They will aspire to higher things. We are bound, every one of us, to pledge ourselves to use our best exertions to effect the prosperity of such an Institution as this Society for Improving the Dwellings of the Labouring Classes.

A SPEECH

In reply to an Address presented to him by One Hundred Young Men of his Congregation, at the Town Hall, Brighton, April 20th, 1852.

MR. CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN,—I should be guilty of affectation if I were to disguise the satisfaction and deep gratefulness which I feel for the Address which you have just presented me. No one can feel more deeply than I do, the deficiencies, the faults, the worthlessness of the ministry of which you have spoken so kindly and so warmly. Whatever eyes have scanned those deficiencies, I will answer for it that none have scanned them so severely as my own. Others may have detected its faults more keenly, no one has felt them as bitterly as I have. And yet, for all this, I shall not for one moment disguise my belief that much of what has been said to-night is true. We have not come here to bandy compliments with one another. You have not come to flatter me : and I have not come, with any affected coyness, to pretend to disclaim your flattery, in order that it may be repeated. You have told me, in the frank spirit of Englishmen, that my ministry has done you good. Frankly, as an Englishman, I tell you with all my heart, I do believe it. I know that there are

men who once wandered in darkness and doubt, and could find no light, who have now found an anchor, and a rock, and resting-place. I know that there are men who were feeling bitterly and angrily, what seemed to them the unfair differences of society, who now regard them in a gentler, more humble, and more tender spirit. I know that there are rich who have been led to feel more generously towards the poor. I know that there are poor who have been taught to feel more truly and more fairly towards the rich. I *believe*—for on such a point *God* can only *know*—that there are men who have been induced to place before themselves a higher standard, and perhaps I may venture to add, have conformed their lives more truly to that standard. I dare not hide my belief in this. I am deeply grateful in being able to say that, if my ministry were to close to-morrow, it would not have been, in this town at least, altogether a failure. There is no vanity in saying this. A man must be strangely constituted indeed if he can say such things, and not feel deeply humbled in remembering what that instrument is, how weak, how frail, how feeble, by which the work is done. I desire to feel this evening far less the honour that may have been done to myself, than the opportunity that is given to us for meeting together in Christian union and brotherhood. We are met here to-night, a minister of the Church of England, a minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, invited by young men, of that age at which it is generally supposed that the hot blood of youth incapacitates, or indisposes them towards religion. We are met here, many of those around me of the richer classes of society, invited by those who are in a humbler and far poorer class, and is it possible for me to see in a picture such as this, merely the prominent object of

myself? Is it possible for me, as a Christian, to see anything in this—almost anything—except a foretaste of better and happier times? A pledge of a coming time, when that shall be realised, of which that which we now see is but the representation : like the ancient *agapæ*, or feasts of charity, in which the Corinthian churches, and many other churches, exhibited before the world the blessed fact of a Church, and of a Brotherhood existing here on earth. These signatures which are appended to this address you have given me, will be to me, I trust, in future times, in many a dark hour, a consolation and encouragement. For if I have been liable—and what public man has not?—to have at times, and in certain quarters, my words misrepresented, my motives misconstrued, the whole aim and object of my teaching utterly perverted—unintentionally, I am sure—yet surely—surely—there is a rich recompense in the warm and affectionate professions of respect which you have made to me this night. Surely there is abundant overpayment, in the affectionate regard with which I have been met in Brighton, in so many personal attachments, some of the kindest and warmest of those friends being now around me, for whose presence here this evening I have to thank your graceful and touching courtesy. My young friends—my dear brethren—I had meant to say more—I had intended to briefly sketch the principles of my public teaching ; but I would far rather leave what Mr. Evans has said of it, knowing it as he does, to speak for itself. Far rather than that I should speak of my own principles, I would leave the decisive testimony of that young man to reply to all the misconceptions and perversions that have been uttered of my work. His words shall answer for it, whether there is Rationalism or Socialism in my teaching.

A SPEECH

Delivered at the Town Hall, Brighton, November 14th, 1850, at a Meeting held for the Purpose of Addressing the Queen in reference to the Attempt of the Pope of Rome to parcel England out into Ecclesiastical Dioceses under Cardinal Wiseman.

WHEN I entered this room, I had not the smallest intention of addressing the Meeting; but certain expressions which have been used since my arrival seem to make it necessary. However that may be, if this were simply a question between the Church of England and the Church of Rome—if it were merely a question of precedence between the Archbishop of Canterbury and Cardinal Wiseman, I should hold it purely superfluous to attend this meeting. As a member of the Church of England, certainly consistently, as every Dissenter will acknowledge, I hold that the Bishop of Rome has been guilty of an act of schism. It was a principle of the early Church, that every church, every kingdom, is supreme in spiritual matters within itself, and that every bishop is vested with authority in his own diocese. So far as this goes, we, the members, and especially the clergy, of the Church of England, have reason to consider ourselves aggrieved; but all that would be necessary

for us to do in such a case is to do what we have done—address our Bishop. We should be by no means justified in calling so large a meeting of our fellow countrymen and fellow townsmen, a large mass of whom are not members of the Church of England, to address the Sovereign.

If this were merely a matter between Protestant and Roman Catholic in point of doctrine, I should feel that nothing more than a protest was necessary. I confess that it seems to me that to say, "We are right and the Roman Catholics are wrong, and therefore the Roman Catholics may not proselytise because they are wrong, and we may because we are right," is a *petitio principii*, a begging of the question, an assumption of the very thing in dispute. I acknowledge that I have but very small sympathy with those intolerant controversialists who imitate the Church of Rome in thundering out anathemas against their brother Christians. I have small sympathy with those persons who are trying to arouse popular indignation against Romanism, by endeavouring to prove that the Pope of Rome is "The Man of Sin," and the Church of Rome a "Synagogue of Satan." Let there be proselytism by fair argument; let there be a fair field and no favour. Let them do what they can; and, in the name of God, we will do what we can. We do not fear Rome. Let them have fair play; we ask no more. For such questions as these, we do not require such meetings.

The ground on which I stand here, the reason on which I protest against this Papal Act, is the assumption of Infallibility which it contains. It is a claim by an individual man, or by a body of men, of a *right* to press on the consciences of mankind, *authoritatively*, opinions of their own. Whether that view be thundered from the Vatican, or be thundered from Exeter Hall, or come from the assumed infallibility of

a private pulpit, be it Dissenting or Church of England, I believe it to be our bounden duty, as Protestants, to protest against it.

I stand forward on behalf of the right of private judgment. I would almost rather retract that expression ; for the words " private judgment " have a proud sound. It seems to assume that private judgment *must* be right ; that every man may judge what he will, and that, forsooth, having judged it, he, in the omnipotence of his individual judgment, must be right. I do not so understand it. A man has not a right to judge what he will ; he may judge what is right : the right of private judgment is the right of judging the right. I retract the expression I used just now, and stand up on behalf of the Rights of Conscience—not the right of man to have what conscience he will, but the right of conscience to control the man and demand allegiance to its decrees. I protest against the Popish claim for this reason—that it is an assumption of man to dictate, in the forum of conscience, to his brother man.

There is something besides which I would rather not have said ; and for that reason I entered this room intending not to say one word. There is an expression in that Address to which in committee I raised an objection. It is that where we call for the remedy which justice demands for the act that has been done. I know my brother ministers meant that they demand no pains and penalties, but merely require and wish that the titles should be ignored ; and yet the expression is one from which, in all freedom, I felt myself shrink. I do not like to ask the interference of the Law ; I do not like to ask for protection in such a matter ; I do not like to seem to stand forward and demand that the titles of the Church of England should be preserved by forms of law

—those of the Church of Rome ignored. There is something in this which appears to speak of fear and apprehension. In my heart of hearts, I have no apprehension of the progress of the Church of Rome. Let men say what they will ; let them number up the chapels that have increased—I grant that there has been an increase : but what if it be that a few hundred ladies have been embroidering altar-cloths, and a few hundred of the aristocracy, unable to keep their own consciences, and not daring to go into the awful question, “What is truth?” have chosen, like children afraid of the dark, to go back to their mothers’ aprons, and throw themselves on Papal infallibility? What if a few, soft, sentimental clergymen have gone to Rome? What then, has *that* touched the great clear, sturdy English heart? When once this question of Romanism, or Tractarianism, or semi-Romanism has been placed before the mass of the country, there has never been a moment of hesitation : it has been met by stern rejection. And therefore, Mr. Chairman, acknowledging the rightful meaning of the words, and perfectly prepared to sign that memorial, I should rather have rejoiced if we had been contented with a simple protest.

A few words on the matter with which the last speaker concluded and I have done. It seems to me that he is under some misapprehension with respect to that expression—“spiritual supremacy.” He objects to it, if I understand him, on the supposition that it gives to the Sovereign spiritual jurisdiction—the right of doing spiritual acts. The Sovereign of England does no spiritual act whatsoever. She does not ordain ministers : she does nothing with regard to the administration of the sacraments ; she does not create one single doctrine. There seems to be a certain misapprehension in respect of the very meaning of the ground on which this

was originally proposed. The speaker dwelt much on the authority and rights of the people—the supremacy of the people. He spoke of the people as the fountain source of all power, spiritually probably, as well as temporally. Is that gentleman aware that the great defender of this doctrine of royal supremacy in matters ecclesiastical—for that is the real meaning, here, of spiritual—did uphold that the people are the rightful sources of all spiritual authority? God has delegated to His church, to the mass of believers, a right to govern themselves according to Scripture and Truth, but as a matter of order, not in heaven, but here on earth, it became necessary for the country, that is, the Christian community at large—for in those days the church was the country and the country the church—that the country should delegate to one individual all its sovereignty : and the Sovereign now speaks spiritually, speaks ecclesiastically, only as the delegate and voice of the sovereign community of the Church of Christ.

THE
CHURCH OF ENGLAND'S INDEPENDENCE
OF THE
CHURCH OF ROME.

*A LECTURE DELIVERED TO THE CHELTENHAM CHURCH OF
ENGLAND READING ASSOCIATION IN 1845.*

THE importance of the subject I propose this evening to bring before your notice—the Church of England's Independence of the Church of Rome—depends entirely upon the altered position of the Church of Rome with respect to the Church of England. A few years ago it would have been thought impossible for the Church of Rome to put forward her claims of supremacy in England ; a few years ago it could never have been imagined that so strong a turn in favour of the Church of Rome would have exhibited itself among a portion of the English clergy as to induce their leader to publish a document whose avowed object was to prevent some of his followers from straggling in the direction of Rome.

The means which he took were to put such a complexion on the Articles of the Church of England as to make it appear that they were not so diametrically opposed to the views of the Church of Rome, that a minister inclining towards those views could not sign them with a safe

conscience. Among the articles which were so treated was the 37th Article of our Church, in which these words occur : " The bishop of Rome hath no jurisdiction in this realm of England : " and though it would have seemed that these words were incapable of this construction, we are told that they do not necessarily imply the full extent of the Protestant doctrine. The inference that we draw from this is, that as it had become necessary so to deal with the Article, there must be a large body in the Church of England prepared to make large concessions to Rome. It is this fact which makes the subject one of importance. For we have of late years thrown off our armour as in a time of peace, and are unprepared, many of us, to hold our own ground in the controversy.

There are, at this time, two doctrines held in the Church of Rome : the one is called the Transalpine,* the other the Cisalpine ; the first is maintained by the Romish Churches of Italy, and the southern States of Europe ; the other is the doctrine held by the Roman Catholics of France. The Transalpine doctrine declares that the Pope is the head of Christendom—that he is superior even to a council of the whole Church—that he has a right to depose princes—and that he is invested with personal infallibility. The Cisalpine doctrine acknowledges the Pope to be the head of Christendom, but places him under the control and subject to the opinion of the council, and denies his right to depose princes. And, although there can be no doubt that if the Church of Rome were ever again to regain her supremacy in this kingdom, it would not be the Cisalpine but the Transalpine doctrine she would enforce, still, inasmuch as there are two doctrines, I think, in an argument of this kind, I am bound

* Called now Ultramontane.

to take the lowest, and state her claims in the least offensive form.*

In 1682 the Gallican Churches published the declaration in which the Cisalpine doctrine is laid down—this nearly led to a separation from the Church of Rome; but that Church, remembering that in the previous century she had lost the brightest jewel in her crown—our own fair kingdom of England—by her premature severity, treated France with greater forbearance, and allowed her claims by sufferance, and hence the origin of what is now called the Cisalpine doctrine.

In stating the claims of the Romish Church, as they were held formerly and as they are held now by Romanists, I must quote two or three sentences from the canon law. The first sentence to which I would call your attention says :

1. The Roman Church, by the Lord's arrangement, is the mother and mistress of all the faithful.

2. Christ, the King of kings and Lord of lords, has given to the Roman pontiff, in the person of Peter, plenitude of power.

3. To the sacred Roman Church, as to the mother and head of all, all the greater causes of the Church should be referred, and terminate in accordance with its decision, nor ought anything to be decreed independently of the Roman pontiff.

The last I quote is the definition of the Synod of Florence :

“The apostolical chair and Roman high priest holds a primacy over the universal Church. . . . The Roman high priest is the successor of Peter. . . . the true lieutenant of

* Had Robertson delivered this lecture in 1873, he would have dealt with Rome's later pretensions.

Christ and the head of the Church, he is the father and the instructor of all Christians ; unto him full power is committed to feed, and direct, and govern, the Catholic Church under Christ, according as it is contained in the acts of general councils and in the holy canons."

These canons, it will be perceived, put forth a two-fold claim : the first is, that Rome is the *Mother* of all Christendom ; the second is, that Rome is the *Mistress* of all Christendom. The first of these claims the Church of England utterly denies, on the ground that we received our Christianity direct from the Apostles, and not from the Church of Rome. And in order to prove this, I must *first* call your attention to the state in which Britain was at the earliest ages ; I must, *secondly*, show you how Christianity was established in the different sections of our island ; and *thirdly*, I must prove to you that Christianity having been established in the apostolic ages in Great Britain did not leave it, but was existent in 597, when the first attempt was made by the Church of Rome to Christianise this country.

With respect to the first division of my argument—the state in which Britain was found at the earliest ages. In the southern part, the Britons were living under the government of the city of Rome, not under the supremacy of the religion of Rome. Further north resided the Picts, probably a class of the hardier Britons, who had never submitted to the Romans, but established themselves in the fastnesses of Scotland. It was to guard against incursions from the Picts that the two great walls from Glasgow to Dumbarton, and from the Solway to the Tyne, were built ; between these two walls was an intermediate territory, afterwards called Valentia, which was captured and recaptured by the contending parties. At length the Roman legions were recalled from

Britain to defend their native city against the attacks of the Goths, the Huns, and the Vandals.

After the removal of the Romans, the Picts assaulted the Britons, who, in their defence, then called in the aid of the Saxons from the northern part of the continent of Europe. The Saxons soon established themselves in the possessions of the Britons, and became dangerous enemies to the Picts, who called to their aid the Scots from Ireland ; for I must here remark that that part of the United Kingdom now called Ireland, was called at that time Scotland ; its inhabitants were denominatéd Scots. Scotland then went only by the name of Caledonia, and its inhabitants were called Picts. The Scots from Ireland assisted the northern Picts, and settled in Caledonia, some time between the years 450 and 567. The population of Great Britain, then, at that period, was as follows : first, we had the Britons ; second, the northern Picts ; third, the southern Picts ; and, besides all these, the Scots of Ireland.

I will now proceed to show how these different divisions of the population were Christianised. I will first refer to that part of the country inhabited by the people called Britons ; and I must here support my argument by a series of quotations, which may be divided into two classes. The first class goes to show that Christianity was introduced into Britain during the apostolic age ; the second class glances at the extreme probability of St. Paul having himself preached Christianity to our forefathers. The first witness I shall call will be Tertullian. This writer, in endeavouring to prove that Christianity was a divine institution, adduces the fact of its general spread throughout the world. He says (A.D. 200):—"All the bounds of Spain, and the various nations of Gaul, and the fastnesses of the Britons, which

were inaccessible to the Romans, but have been subdued to Christ."

The next witness is Eusebius, who lived about 320 :—

"Some of the Apostles crossed the ocean to the isles which are called British."

Next I refer to the British historian Gildas, who flourished A.D. 564 :—

"In the mean time the true sun enlightened this island, frozen with its northern situation."

The whole meaning of this passage turns upon the expression "In the mean time." Gildas had just before been treating of the defeat of Boadicea, which took place in 61. From this class of proof we collect that Christianity was considered fairly established in Britain in Tertullian's time. Eusebius traces it to apostolic preaching ; and Gildas fixes that preaching to some period before the year 61.

The second class of quotations consist principally of circumstantial accounts, strongly tending, however, to prove that Paul did minister in Britain. But if we cannot prove that fact, we have abundant evidence here to show that Christianity was established in Britain long before it was introduced by St. Augustine. Clement, Bishop of Rome, writes :—

"Paul passed to the extremity of the west," which was a common appellation of Britain.

Secondly, St. Jerome, about the year 400, says :—"That after his imprisonment, having been in Spain, he went from ocean to ocean, and preached the Gospel in the western parts."

Thirdly, Theodoret, A.D. 459, tells us "that St. Paul, after his release from imprisonment, went to Spain, and from thence carried the Gospel to other nations."

Lastly, Venantius Fortunatus, Bishop of Poitiers, A.D. 580, says :—" He crossed the ocean to the British territories and the end of the world."

Let us review, for one moment, this evidence. First, Clement tells us that St. Paul travelled to the west : Jerome and Theodoret fix the time of this journey to some period after his first imprisonment at Rome : lastly, Venantius specifies Britain as visited in this journey. There is certainly too much of fable belonging to the writings of Fortunatus—and he writes too late for us to attach credit to his evidence if it were unsupported—but taken together with other testimony, there is a great air of probability in what he says. However, there are some other corroborating circumstances.

During the ministry of St. Paul at Rome, there were with him there several distinguished Britons. An ancient document, known by the name of the British Triads, asserts that Caractacus brought over Christianity to his native country on his return from captivity in Rome. We know that he was carried there A.D. 52, and returned in 58 or 59, the very year that St. Paul was also released. And as the illustrious prisoner and the illustrious Apostle were both in Rome together, it is no great presumption to suppose that they became acquainted with each other. It was impossible that Paul should be utterly ignorant of the conversion of Caractacus ; and it was equally impossible for Caractacus, after his conversion, to be ignorant of the fact that the great Apostle of the Gentiles was then dwelling within the same city with him. It is quite possible that Caractacus, on his release, solicited the Apostle to proceed with him to Britain.

At the time of St. Paul's sojourn in Rome there were two

British ladies also residing there, Claudia Ruffina and Pomponia Græcina ; the first of these the Apostle mentions in his second Epistle to Timothy, where he says :—"Eubulus greeteth thee, and Pudens, and Linus, and Claudia." Pudens we know, on the authority of the poet Martial, was the husband of Claudia, and Linus was her son. According to the testimony of Clement, Linus was by the Apostles made the first bishop of Rome ; and it is interesting to remark, by the way, that this country gave to Rome her first bishop. Historians tell us that Claudia had the well-being of her country greatly at heart ; that she sent out books for their instruction in literature ; and it is not probable that this woman, who knew Christ, and knowing also the great champion of Christianity was in Rome, would be instrumental in persuading him to proceed with Caractacus to Britain. Pomponia Græcina was the wife of Aulus Plautius, the lieutenant or legate of the Roman Emperor Claudius in Britain, and in all probability was a convert to Christianity, for she was accused of having embraced a foreign heresy, and tried before her husband, by whom she was acquitted. The allegations made against her by Tacitus are, that she was melancholy and morose, for which the sedateness and circumspection of a Christian lady would easily be mistaken by these Pagans. Thus we have three links more in the chain, which exactly coincides with what we have already seen was the testimony of Gildas. For he makes the planting of Christianity anterior to the year 61. We have now brought evidence to show that the Apostle Paul was in that direction after the year 59. And although this last branch of the evidence be but circumstantial as to St. Paul, it is direct evidence that the Gospel of Christ was preached in Britain in the early ages.

The next portion of the inhabitants of these islands that we turn to are the Scots of Ireland. In the year 431 Palladius was sent by Pope Celestine to convert the Irish ; but in this he failed, and died the next year, among the Picts in Caledonia. After him, in 432, St. Patrick preached the Gospel to the Irish with great success. But a Romish historian admits that Patrick not only found Christianity established in that country, but a Christian episcopal hierarchy existing. And in further corroboration of this we are told by Bede that when the Saxon bishops arrived in Britain, Daganus, an Irish bishop, refused communion with them, because he celebrated Easter after the western fashion ; making it most plain that Ireland had received her religion not from Rome, but from the east, before Augustine, and even before Patrick preached there. The Southern Picts were converted by Nennianus, a Briton, in the year 412. The northern Picts were converted A.D. 360, by Columba, a Scot from Ireland, who founded the celebrated monastery of the Culdees in Iona, and converted King Bridius and his nation to Christ.

But the Church of Rome may say, as one of her historians has done, that all this is admitted ; that Christianity was established in Great Britain in the earliest ages, but that it all faded away. That when it was preached by St. Augustine, it was like a resurrection from the dead. But we are in a position to prove that it never left Britain from the period of its first establishment. That it existed in Britain in the first century is proved by the authority of Clement and others. Tertullian carries it through the second century, up to the year 200. We have another testimony to the continuance of Christianity in the second century in the patronage which it received from Lucius, a British king.

There is something fabulous in this account, for the writer tells us that Lucius was King of all England, which we know could not have been the case ; but we know that there was such a king, for Archbishop Ussher speaks of two coins with the letters L.U.C. on one side, and the mark of the Cross on the other—a convincing proof that Christianity had not died away in the second century.

In the third century the Church of England presents herself to us in a different form, as a persecuted Church. Towards the close of the third century the Roman world found itself under four masters : Diocletian and Maximian, who bore the title of Augustus ; Constantius Chlorus and Galerius, who had the rank of Cæsar. In the year 303, by the edict of Nicomedia, the Christians were given up to persecution, their property condemned to confiscation, and themselves denied the rights of law. This was the last and the severest pagan persecution the Church of Christ had to endure. In the eastern part this persecution lasted for ten years ; in the western it only lasted two years.

In the year 305 Diocletian and Maximian were compelled by Galerius to resign their dignity, upon which he assumed himself the government of the eastern division of the empire, leaving the government of the west to his colleague Constantius. Constantius was the father of Constantine the Great, and although not a Christian himself, was lenient towards those professing that religion, and, consequently, the persecution ceased in the west. But during the two years alluded to, when Constantius only held the second-rate position of Cæsar, the Church of England tasted all the bitterness of persecution in its most cruel forms ; the names of some of its martyrs have come down in a glorious roll to posterity ; I will only mention one of

them, St. Alban, the first martyr of our country. It appears, according to the accounts of Bede and Gildas, that St. Alban had sheltered a Christian confessor—in other words, he had held out his protection to a Christian minister—for this he was given up for execution. But the courage and firmness with which he met his fate made such a powerful impression on the spectators, that a thousand persons fled into Wales to seek out the holy Confessor in whose behalf St. Alban had suffered. This proves the existence of religion in the third century.

In the fourth century we find the Church of England taking her position among the Great Councils of the Christian Church. The first Council we read of was that of Arles, A.D. 314, summoned against the Donatists ; the question debated was whether the validity of Christian ordination depended upon the character of the ordainer. At that Council, Restitutus, Bishop of London, Eborius, Bishop of York, and another British bishop named Adelfius, whose see is illegible among the signatures, attended. At that time England was divided into three portions : the north *Maxima Cæsariensis*, with York for its metropolis ; the south or *Britannia Prima*, with London for its metropolis ; and Wales, or *Britannia Secunda*, with Carleon for its metropolis ; and the probability is that this Adelfius was Bishop of Carleon ; and thus the three metropolitan bishops of England took their position in the Councils of Christendom. At the Council of Sardica, A.D. 347, we also find the representatives of the Church of England. And lastly at the Council of Ariminum, A.D. 359, we have historical testimony that there were British bishops present supported at the Emperor's expense ; for in those primitive days a British prelate was too poor to be able to pay his own travelling expenses.

In the fifth century we find the Church of England clearing herself from heresy. About the year 418 Pelagianism began to make its way to this country. Pelagius was a Welshman named Morgan, which in the language of Wales means the sea, and was Grecised into Pelagius. He became the leader of an heretical sect which denied the transmission of Adam's sin to his descendants. In 418, the orthodox of the Church of England asked assistance against this heresy from the Churches of France, who sent over to them two bishops, Germanus and Lupus. A solemn discussion was held at St. Alban's, and the Pelagians worsted.

The last century I shall have to speak of is the sixth, for in 597 Augustine was sent to Britain by Pope Gregory the First. St. Augustine was installed as the first Archbishop of Canterbury, and he invited the British bishops to meet him in conference. At this conference, he asked three things of the English Prelates before they could be admitted into communion with his Church. First, they must give up their way of celebrating Easter; second, they must conform to the Romish mode of administering baptism; thirdly, they must obey the Church of Rome in all spiritual matters.

The Britons at that time were in the habit of celebrating their Easter after the manner of the Eastern Churches, and this circumstance proves distinctly and most indisputably that they did not receive their faith from the Western Churches. Before the bishops went to meet Augustine they on their way consulted an old pious hermit. The holy man told them that if the stranger bore the mark of humility, for the sake of peace, it would be better to accede to his demands; but if, on the contrary, he came before them with show and pomp, and failed to treat them with due deference, they were to resist him, for they might rest assured that he was not of

Christ. The answer of the British bishops was this, "That other obedience than the deference of brotherly love they owed not to him whom they called Pope, and for their parts they were under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Carleon upon Usk, who under God was their spiritual adviser and director."

From these facts we must arrive at the conclusion that in the first century Christianity was established in England; that in the second century the Church of England was a prosperous Church; that in the third century she was a persecuted Church; that in the fourth century she took her place in the councils of the Church Universal; that in the fifth century she was purging herself from heresy; and that in the sixth century she took her stand on the ground of determined Protestantism. I therefore conclude the first part of my argument by inferring, that **THE CHURCH OF ROME IS NOT OUR MOTHER.**

With regard to the second claim of Popery—that Rome is the *Mistress* of all Churches in the world—we must enquire, first, how Romish supremacy arose; then we must show that it was utterly inconsistent with the theory and practice of the early Christian Churches; and lastly we will show that it is utterly incompatible with Scripture.

It would be a perilous thing to hazard the assertion that the Church of Rome had no precedence over other Churches in very early times: but the question is, what was the nature of that precedence; and I think I shall be able to show that it was not an ecclesiastical precedence—a precedence founded on a divine right; it arose rather from the secular supremacy of the city in which the Church of Rome was founded, than the supremacy of the Church herself.

It is scarcely enough, as it has been well remarked by

Bishop Hopkins, to say that Rome of the early ages was like London of the present day; Rome was the metropolis, not of a country, but of the whole world; kings and nations bowed down before her; she gave the law to the universe. It was the boast of the ancients that they were *Romans*, not that they were *Italians*; their pride and glory were concentrated in the Leviathan city. We all know that even now the influence of anything metropolitan is great; the metropolis rules the trade of the country, it is the arbiter of the fashions, it contains the head establishments of all the societies, and when deputations come down from the mother society, we look upon them with marked deference, not because they are men of transcendent abilities, but because they are metropolitans. This was exactly the position of the Bishop of Rome in the early ages of Christianity. He had constant access to the Emperor; the bishops of other Churches flocked around him, for few would go to Carthage, and few to Antioch in comparison; but all at one time or other had business at Rome; so that the city in which he was located conferred much power and influence on him. This we should be led to think *à priori*; we proceed now to examine whether the supposition is borne out by the facts.

Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons, in the celebrated argument which Tertullian also used against heretics, called the argument from prescription, after confronting his antagonists, and shattering their arguments by quotations from Scripture, says:—"In every Church they who know the truth may examine the tradition from the Apostles which has been manifested to the whole world. And we can enumerate those who were appointed bishops in the Churches by the Apostles and their successors even to our times, who never even taught or knew anything like what these heretics rave

about. But since it would be tedious in such a volume as the present to enumerate the succession of all the Churches, we confound all heretics by showing the tradition of the greatest, the most ancient, the universally known Church—that tradition and that faith which come down even to our days in the succession of bishops. *For it must needs be that on account of its superior principality every Church should resort to this Church* (the Church of Rome) in which the tradition that is apostolic has ever been preserved by those that are connected with it.” The words “on account of its superior principality” show that the dignity was not derived from ecclesiastical right, but from the city in which the bishop lived. Cyprian observes:—

“Plainly, therefore, according to its size, Rome should precede Carthage.”

This boasted supremacy was merely secular pre-eminence—human pre-eminence—wisely ordained, perhaps, for purposes of order, but claiming no divine origin or right. It was the same sort of supremacy as a foreman holds with a jury; one with superior influence amongst equals; it was not authority from God; it was an authority conferred by men. But efforts were speedily made to increase it. In the 6th canon of the Council of Nice, two other cities are spoken of as on an equality with Rome: “Let the ancient customs be kept which are established in Egypt, Libya, Pentapolis, that the Bishop of Alexandria may have power over all these, forasmuch as this is the custom with the Bishop of Rome. In like manner also in Antioch and in the other provinces, let the privileges, the dignities, and the authority of the churches be preserved.” You will observe that the Church of Rome was not allowed universal pre-eminence in those days; the Church of Antioch and Church of Alexandria are mentioned as well.

But as we go down the page of history we find this innocent precedence gradually developing itself into something of a very different character. In 347 the Council of Sardica was held, and concluded by reinstating Athanasius, the great and noble defender of Christian truth against the heresy of Arianism, after he had been removed from his see by a cabal of Arian bishops. He had been banished by the Emperor to Treves on the Mosellè, and then recalled, when it was discovered that the charges against him were mere fabrications. But his enemies deposed him again on the ground that he had returned to his see without being legally restored by a Synod. In this state of things he put himself under the protection of Julius, Bishop of Rome. Julius summoned a provincial Synod, which, upon examination of the case, pronounced that Athanasius had been illegally deposed. But the Arians persisted that this was illegal; whereupon Julius applied to the Emperor Constans and requested him to summon a general Council. After that Council had restored Athanasius, the president, Hosius, Bishop of Cordova, rose and made this remarkable proposal to the Council for their ratification: "That if any bishop should conceive himself injured by the sentence of the neighbouring bishops and desired to be reheard: If you please, in respect to the memory of St. Peter, let those bishops who have pronounced judgment write to Julius, Bishop of Rome, and transmit a copy of their proceedings to him, and if he thinks it proper that the case should be tried over again, let him assign judges for that purpose; but if he is satisfied with what is done and declares against a refusal, let his sentence stand good and determine the point."

Observe, in the first place, Julius did not summon the Council, but asked the Emperor to do it. In the next place,

even this privilege proposed by Hosius gave him only the power to send the judgment back for consideration. And is it possible that if the bishops of Rome had ever had the right of ultimate appeal in all cases, Hosius could so have compromised his friend's dignity as to ask so small a matter as a favour, when he could have claimed so much more as a right? This power of the Bishop of Rome, small as it was then, increased. Apiarius, a presbyter of Sicca, in Mauritania, was deposed by his bishop, Urbanus ; he appealed to Zosimus, then Pope of Rome ; Zosimus sent a peremptory order for his restoration, alleging the above-named canon of the Council of Sardica, which he pronounced to be a canon of the general Council of Nice. The Mauritanian bishops promised submission till they could send to the East for authentic copies of the decrees of the Council of Nice. When their messengers returned with the manuscripts, and the canon was not to be found, they sent word of this to the Pope, then Boniface, who had succeeded Zosimus, and the matter seemed at rest. But Apiarius applied to the next Pope, Celestine, who issued another mandate ; upon this the African bishops assembled in the 6th Council of Carthage, A.D. 418, and treated the mandate of the Pope with the most determined defiance ; they not only refused submission to his authority, but bade him, in strong language, not to interfere with regulations of their Church for the future. And we ask if the present doctrine of the Church of Rome has any warrant in these examples? We ask besides whether they do not demonstrate that the supremacy of the Church of Rome in those ages was altogether of a secular character?

My next point is to show that the supremacy of Rome is utterly inconsistent with the theory of the early church

respecting ecclesiastical unity. There is a peculiar need in the present day that our views should be accurate and just on this point. During the last century a strong reaction took place from indifferentism to religious warmth, and then when men had strongly felt the value of doctrinal truth, they raised it not merely to a prominent position which was right, but also to an exclusive position which was not right—to think of anything external was legalism. It was found, however, that this system would not work well; the theory must fail; churchmen, dissenters, Socinians, could not meet on the same platform and merge their differences; and earnest-minded men began to feel that there was something wrong in a system which so lavishly conceded the right of private judgment, that the youngest and the most ignorant conceived themselves qualified to pronounce on the spirituality of their teachers. And then there was a turning on every side, and a yearning for something more calm and more systematic.

It is remarkable how this desire seems to have lain at the bottom of most of the extravagances which we have witnessed in the few last years. It was a desire to discover something like a principle of true unity. Some there were who sought for this unity by the restoration of miraculous gifts to the Church; another sect which started at Plymouth sought it in superior spirituality; a third in an ideal church of invisible unity; and then there was a fourth party who looked to foreign communions for this principle. They saw in the Church of Rome something standing in striking contrast to the torn and distracted state of our own Church, and it must be admitted that there is something in such a system to captivate a thoughtful mind. There is something of symmetry in the idea of every bishop like every planet presiding

over its own system, and yet all obeying in the vast world of space the influences of a single centre of unity. It is captivating, for realised in its proper place this will be the unity of heaven. It was this idea which fired the dying mind of our saintly Hooker: "I go," said he, "from a Church torn and distracted, to a Church in which every angel and every archangel occupies the exact position assigned to him by the one Head."

But beautiful as this is, the question recurs—Is this the unity of Scripture? In that prayer—the last long prayer of our Saviour—He prayed to the Father—"That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." Now was it an outward unity, or an inward unity, that our Lord and Saviour meant? Let any earnest Christian ponder upon this passage and say whether these expressions do not include an external unity. It was a unity which was to have an effect upon the world. Can the world believe except by seeing? and can they see an unity which is invisible? It is an express contradiction—so that there is here implied not merely a consent of jarring sects in fundamental truths, but besides this something visible—something of ecclesiastical unity; and when we ask in what form that unity consists, we have not to argue out the question now: for we are not at issue with dissenters, but with Romanists who will admit that the external form is what we make it—an episcopal form. But now the question is whether that outward unity consists in what they make it, viz., union under one visible head on earth.

In discussing this question, to prove the Romish theory a modern one, I shall examine the theory of the third century—I fix on this because then a number of Church questions

arose which compelled the bishops of those ages to examine more accurately than had been ever done before the theory of ecclesiastical principles. In 250, the first dissenters arose in the Church—heretics there had always been, but, up to that time, schismatics there were none. When we look into the pages of Cyprian, the great champion of the Church's rights in those days, we find that the doctrine universally held was this—that a bishop occupied a two-fold position with respect to the Church. First, that he was the head of that portion of the Church beneath him, and that for the government of this he was responsible to none on earth. And secondly, that he bore a relation to the Church universal, by which he had a right in conjunction with other bishops to deliberate in synods and councils for the good of the whole. This would make a bishop bear the same relation to the Church as an individual state of Switzerland does to the whole Republic; each state makes its own laws, and governs its own population, without interference on the part of the Republic, while at the same time it has a voice in the council which regulates the international laws between canton and canton. This is proved by quotations from this author :—

“Every bishop orders and directs his own acts, having to render an account of his purpose to the Lord.”

“Since it has been ordered by us all—that each man's cause should be heard in that place where the crime has been committed ; and that to each pastor a portion of the flock should be assigned which he is to govern and give an account of his charge to the Lord.”

“The episcopate is one, of which a part is held by each bishop with the full authority of the whole.”

You will remark that this theory cannot be held with

Rome's present theory. The theory of church unity in the third century was a number of equal and independent bishops linked together. The theory of Rome is the subordination of all other bishops to a single one. Cyprian held that the next authority above a bishop is God—Rome interposes another link, the Pope.

That the claims of the Church of Rome are inconsistent with the *practice* of the early churches we shall infer from the manner in which other bishops demeaned themselves towards the Bishop of Rome. Whenever a bishop came into collision with the Pope, we may see clearly, by the line of conduct taken up, what was the practice of the church. In 158, the mode of celebrating Easter was a matter of dispute in the Churches. The Eastern Churches held that it ought to be celebrated on the 14th day of the Paschal moon—the day on which the Jews immolate the Paschal lamb—let that day fall in whatever part of the week it might. The Western Churches uniformly held that Easter should be celebrated on that day of the week on which our Lord rose : consequently, if the 14th day of the moon fell on the Monday, that was Easter to the Orientals, but the Western Christians celebrated it on the Sunday following. In that year we find Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, on a visit to Anicetus, Bishop of Rome. Anicetus could not persuade Polycarp to celebrate Easter according to his fashion, because he maintained that he had learned the manner from St. John ; and Polycarp had no influence in changing the habit of Anicetus, for he had received the custom from his predecessors. In this dilemma, how did they act ? They parted in fraternal amity, and Anicetus even conceded to Polycarp, in token of respect, the right of consecrating the Eucharist in his own church.

In the year 196, the dispute was again revived. We find

Victor, Bishop of Rome, refusing for this cause to communicate with Polycrates and the Eastern Churches. But so soon as the Churches which were on his own side of the question heard of this stretch of power, letters of remonstrance poured in upon him. Among others there has come down to us a severe rebuke administered to him by Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons. And now pause for a moment upon this. Is it possible that the two saintly martyrs could have ventured to oppose the Bishop of Rome, if the doctrine of Rome, being an universal mistress, had been known in those days? And if they had, is it possible that Anicetus would have so far forgotten his own dignity as to submit without remonstrance? In the case, too, of Irenæus, observe, the opposition was not that of a theological opponent—Irenæus was on the Papal side of the question—his rebuke was the rebuke of a friend and a partizan. We come to another case. In 256, the question which agitated the African and Italian Churches was this :—Whether those persons baptized by heretics should be re-baptized, or whether their baptism should be considered valid. This was an extremely delicate question. For if it were maintained that the baptism was invalid, then might discredit seem to be thrown on the Institution of Christ, which only enjoined that baptism should be administered “in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost.” On the other hand, if it were declared valid, it was apparently proclaiming that there was no difference between the Church of Christ and heretics. Cyprian, at the head of an African council, pronounced against the validity of baptism by heretics, and he writes thus to the Pope in announcing this decision :—

“I thought it right to confer with one so wise and grave as you, dearest brother, on a subject which regards the unity and dignity of the Church.”

He did not send the decision to Rome for approval, for he speaks of it as a point settled. He did not write to him because he was bishop of Rome, but because he was grave and wise.—Upon this Stephen excommunicated Cyprian and his bishops, on the ground that their doctrine was founded on tradition.—There is something exceedingly instructive in Cyprian's answer :—

“From whence does this tradition come? Does it descend from the authority of the Lord and the Gospels, or the Apostolic Epistles? If, therefore, it be either commanded in the Gospels or contained in the Acts or Epistles that those who to us form any heresy should not be baptised, let this divine and sacred tradition be observed. . . . But custom, without truth on its side, is only antiquity of error.”

Is there anything like infallibility here? The Pope asserts certain things, and Cyprian refers him to Scripture for answer. The question is—did Cyprian admit the infallibility of Rome, or did he reject it? But this is not all: Cyprian summoned another Council, in which he used these words :

“It remains that each of us should give his opinion on this subject without judging anyone, or separating from our communion those who are not of our opinion. For none of *us* sets himself up to be the *bishop of bishops*, or compels his colleagues to obey, since every bishop has a full liberty and entire power of will, and as he cannot be judged by another, so he cannot judge another.”

Observe the caustic irony of Cyprian: “we are not bishops of bishops;” it is evident from this that the Popes were creeping up into power; that they were seeking to be strong; but Cyprian throws it in the teeth of this Pope that he is not acting according to Scripture, nor according to the

rules of the Church. And this is not Cyprian's individual and unauthorised opinion—he did not stand alone—for Fermilian, Bishop of Cesarea, in Cappadocia, thus writes:—

“I am indignant at this so manifest folly of Stephen, because he is in fact bringing in many other rocks beside the one rock, while he defends, *on his own authority*, the doctrine that heretics have the right of baptism.”

It was decided in after years that the *doctrine* of Cyprian on this point of baptism was wrong, and the doctrine of Stephen was right; but this makes the case more strong; for his *conduct* in opposing Stephen was never reprehended. And now take the facts as they stand. Two illustrious bishops resist the bishop of Rome, and they have never been blamed for it. Rome excommunicates Cyprian, and Cyprian lives and dies in communion with the universal Church. The Pope launches his anathema at Cyprian, and yet the Church Catholic, nay, the Church of Rome herself, has canonised his opponent. What is this but the doctrine of a Church's independence, recognised in the *practice* of the early Church? What is it but a proof that in the third century Rome's supremacy was not known?

Lastly, there is no foundation for the supremacy of the Romish Church to be found in Scripture. The only passages of Scripture on which Romanists build their claim are to be found in Matthew xvi. 18, and John xxi. 16:—“And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church: and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” “He saith to him again the second time, Simon, *son* of Jonas, lovest thou me? he saith unto him, Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep.” Without entering into a critical examination of these passages, which would take up some time, I would just put

the question on a practical basis, and ask whether there was anything like supremacy allowed to Peter throughout our Lord's life, or the Acts of the Apostles. Mark this passage, Matt. xx. 25 :—"Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you : but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant." This was said to the Apostles, *after* Peter had received his name.

In the Acts of the Apostles we find that when the people of Samaria were converted, and the news was carried to Jerusalem, they sent to them Peter and John ; the very reverse of what must have been the case had he been invested with that which is claimed for him. In the great Synod of Jerusalem, Peter did not take the principal part ; it was not summoned by Peter ; Peter did not preside in it ; but James, Bishop of Jerusalem. With this supposed supremacy of St. Peter, the supremacy of Rome, as far as Scripture goes, stands or falls. Judge ye, brethren.

And now one word in conclusion. I have stated the case simply and plainly, because I wished calmly to appeal to your reason on so important a subject. I might have made it much more interesting had I taken Transalpine doctrine and exhibited to you the overbearing claims, and traced the atrocities, of the ambition of the Church of Rome, because it is easier to enlist the passions of men than it is to engage their reason in the investigation of truth. But I have done it advisedly, because I am persuaded that when once a controversial opinion has arisen in the examination of a question, truth may be elicited, but the sacred power of truth is at an end.

We are told that, at the breaking up of the Council of Trent, the legate pronounced the words anathema to all heretics, and then the whole assembly rose, and the hall re-echoed from every lip, "Anathema—Anathema!" It was well suggested by an American bishop of our own day, that if the Angel of Peace could have appeared at that moment, and whispered in the ears of the infuriated Romanists the Scriptural warning, "Bless, and curse not," there might have been a flush of shame on every cheek. The Church of Rome arrogates to herself the privilege of cursing. She takes the verse, "If any man hear not the Church, let him be unto you as a heathen and a publican," and on it she grafts the miserable exposition that the Church has a power of anathema. Brethren, let not this be our spirit in entering upon controversy. The Lord says, "Vengeance is mine!" And again, "The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God."

With all her superincumbent mass of superstition, we still believe that there are thousands in the Church of Rome marching on to glory. We believe that in our own land, many of those who would lead us Romeward are holy, earnest, pious, but, I must add, mistaken men. Allow me to advise you, my friends, in this crisis. It is not a subject of pride or boast to us that God has made our Church independent; but it is at our peril that we throw that independence away. Our Church cannot delegate to another the duty of watching over the eternal truth committed to her charge. *You* cannot delegate to another man your own right, your own duty of private judgment. It is not in haughtiness, but in a solemn sense of responsibility, that we are bound to assert our ecclesiastical as well as our individual independence.

We take our stand on the ground of historical truth, and pronounce that ROME IS NOT OUR MOTHER. We take our stand on the practice and theory of the ancient Church ; we take our stand on the everlasting pages of the Bible ; we take our stand on the facts of that liberty into which our martyred Reformers emancipated us ; and then, in deep and humble thankfulness to God, we declare that ROME IS NOT OUR MISTRESS.

NOTES OF A LECTURE ON THE PROGRESS
OF THE WORKING CLASSES

*Delivered at Hurstpierpoint, in 1851, to the Members
of a Working Men's Reading Room.*

I AM here to-night through the invitation of your kind friends, with no right but that of unfeigned interest in every Institution like yours.

The subject I had proposed was the Progress of Society. I changed it for that of the Working Classes. But even this is too full of pretension.

Nevertheless, the mere fact of my standing here to-night is full of significance.

More so than railways or electric telegraphs.

That so many of the Working Classes should come here after a hard day's work is very significant.

It proves the growing victory of the spirit over the animal: That the lower life of toil and animal indulgence is getting to be reckoned as not the *all* of man.

It shows, too, that the Working Classes are becoming conscious of their own destinies.

Any Society is in an advanced state when it begins to contemplate itself, and asks, "Whither do we tend?"

Three thousand years ago, the centre of the World's civilization was in Eastern Africa.

The monuments of this civilization still remain. The Pyramids.—They are the wonder of travellers, whose report of their measurements excites in turn our astonishment and surprise.

But to one considering the progress of the race, these Pyramids tell a different tale. They were built by the Working Classes, under coercion. They were built for Royal ostentation.

Herodotus speaks of hundreds of thousands degraded into serfs.

In the Metropolis of the World's present civilization, a structure stood this year almost as marvellous as these Pyramids.

Remarkable not for gigantic massiveness.—But for punctuality and order.

Built, too, under Royal auspices, and built by the Labouring Classes.

But not built, like the Pyramids, for Royal splendour. It was built for the exhibition of the works of Labouring Men.

You could not go through that building without feeling that Royalty itself was second there, not first.

One feeling I had was—There is nothing here that I can make. I belong to the non-producing classes.

New era.—The dignity of Labour.—The sinking of the Individual in the Society.

Another truth typified by that bearing on the destinies of the Working Classes. The approach of an age of Peace.—Falaise.—Guizot.

Assume, then, the fact of the growing importance of the Working Classes.

There are two ways of treating this fact, just as there are

two ways of treating an heir just entering on a noble patrimony. One is, that of the sycophant, to tell him how great he is.

Another way is, that of wise friends, who tell him that as he has become great, therefore he has duties ; because he has become rich, therefore he has responsibilities.

There are two ways of treating the Working Classes. One, to tell them how enlightened they are.—How powerful.—That *Vox populi vox Dei*, &c.

Another, that of reminding them that because free, they should fit themselves for freedom ; because destined to play a great part on the stage of the world's history, therefore it behoves them to cast off their ignorance—their vices.

Value of these Institutions. First, Habits of self-government. Secondly, They expand the sympathies.

I hold it as a principle that a man is great and good in proportion to the extent of his sympathies.—The man whose eye is ever fixed on himself is the smallest of human beings.—The next step is love of Relations.—The next, love of Country.—The next, sympathy with all that belongs to Man.

And this is God's method of gradual education, through the Family, the Nation, the Race.

One means given for this in public newspapers; which tell of other countries.—A wise man gets out of the paltry events of his own village—election of churchwardens, &c.—to think of great questions.—Further still, the social state of other countries.

Observe on our English narrowness, the idea that one Englishman is equal to two Frenchmen.—We are apt to think that English manners, English literature, &c., is the only good thing in God's World.

Recent case of an illustrious foreigner, formerly Dictator

of Hungary. Received with enthusiasm by the Working Classes. I pronounce no opinion in this place about him. Some say great, good, noble, others call him a charlatan and revolutionist. This matters not. The question is not so much *what* a man worships, admires, but *as* what. Kossuth may be no hero, if you will; but to see those hard-handed sons of toil in Manchester and Birmingham honouring one whom they thought good and noble, when in exile and oppressed: he has little heart indeed who is not touched by it.

Now, this kind of Institution fits men for Work.—Foolish objection that it incapacitates them for business.—The labourer who knows something of chemistry—on what principle soils are composed; why such manures are employed in one case and not in another; according to what laws decomposition takes place—is a better labourer than one who knows nothing of all this.

The mechanic who understands the laws of motion is a better mechanic than the Chinese sort, who can merely follow a copy.

The domestic servant is improved when she understands the reason why certain things are done and why certain results follow.

There is a foolish prejudice against educating the poor, lest we should fail to get servants or apprentices.

Putting aside the diabolical character of the objection, think of the sacrifice of a human being, that your work may be done or your food made!

Progress means—1. Not to be free from work: envy of ladies and gentlemen false and foolish, if by that is meant persons who have nothing to do but to amuse themselves.

—Laws of Humanity.—Greatness.—Goodness.—

Only through toil is muscular strength and health gained. Mental force is got by struggle with difficulty.

2. Not the obliteration of differences in rank.

There can be no doubt that the growth in importance of the labouring classes will alter ranks, making them less exclusive, less bitter to others—will raise some who are now degraded, &c.

But it betrays an ignorance of human nature to suppose that ranks will ever be obliterated. Superior tastes, capacities, &c., will unite some into a class, and distinguish them from others.

Gradation of ranks brings out various manifestations of our Humanity.—Gratitude.—Aspiration.—Dignity.—Respect.

3. Not the obliteration of difference in condition.

Of the many errors entertained by those who have advocated the cause of the Working Man, there are few to be more regretted than the exaggerated importance attached to inequality of condition.

Inequality of condition, so far as it stints the faculties, or cuts off from opportunities of information, it is well to desire should be removed, but in itself it is a trifle. And all this foolish exaggeration fixes the attention on what is external in the condition, as if the equality to be arrived at were the superficial external equality. It is not this that makes real inequality. False, vulgar thoughts that, because you cannot keep a horse or drive a carriage, therefore you have not your rights.

4. But progress means increased opportunities of developing the heart, the conscience, and the intellect. It is not each man's born right to be as rich as his neighbour, or to possess the soil.

But it is his inalienable right to be permitted to develop all the powers that God gave.

If the labourer live so that the death of a child is welcomed by the thought that there is one mouth the less to feed, he cannot develop his heart-affections.

If he lives in a cottage where brothers and sisters sleep in one room, he cannot develop his conscience.

If he comes home overworn, so that he has no time to read, then he cannot develop his intellect.

Clearly, therefore, define such a social position for the labouring man as shall give him scope enough to be in every sense of the word a MAN :—a Man whose respect is not servility ; whose religion is not superstition ; and whose obedience is not the drudgery of dumb, driven cattle.

Until that time come, the Working Classes are not free.

*SHORTHAND NOTES OF A LECTURE DELIVERED
AT HURSTPIERPOINT (uncorrected)*

ON THE PROGRESS OF THE WORKING CLASSES.

I HAVE been requested by your Treasurer to address you this evening on the opening of your Reading Room, having no other qualification for this office but only a firm belief in the sacredness of the progress of the working classes ; and besides that, I trust, an earnest sympathy with their cause. And the bare fact of my addressing you this evening is, to a certain extent, significant of human progress. I do not mean as a merely isolated fact, for an isolated fact it is not ; it is only one of many such and similar facts. The office of lecturer to the working classes is becoming every day a more distinct profession. I am treading to-night in a well-beaten path, in which numbers have trod before : clergymen, men of literature, and lately two eminent noblemen—Lord Shaftesbury and Lord Carlisle.

Two centuries ago it would have been almost impossible to collect such an assembly as this. It might have been possible to have collected as many round the village may-pole, or on the 5th of November, or at an election of a knight of the shire, or for the purposes of public wassail or revelry ; but the bare fact that night after night hundreds and thousands of the working classes may be collected together to listen to lectures on literature, or lectures on science, or lectures relating to their own social progress, is a

most characteristic fact of the age—significant far more than railways or the electric telegraph, of human progress : significant of this, that the spiritual life is gaining the victory over the animal life ; that men are beginning to feel that a life of mere labour—that a life of low, gross indulgence, is not the whole end of man's existence ; significant again, of this, that the working community are beginning to become more vividly alive to their own progress and their own interests—itsself a most important fact, for wherever a society has begun to turn its eye inward on itself, to ask wherefore it exists, what is its destiny, and what the intention of its being, there has been made a giant step in human progress.

Let me take another case of contrast. Three thousand years ago the centre of the world's civilisation was on the eastern coast of Africa. All that the world then knew of science, all that the world then knew of art, all that the world then knew of philosophy and religion, was centred, so to speak, in the narrow valley of the Nile. Now the records, or rather the monuments, of that civilisation exist even to this day. In the plains of Egypt those vast pyramids raising their peaked tops almost to the stars, in that peculiarly dry climate—exhibit as freshly as yesterday the very mark made by the mason on the stone. Hundreds and thousands of European travellers have come across from Cairo and told us marvellous tales respecting them. They have computed the height of those pyramids, and they tell us the impress of awe and wonder and solemnity made by them on their mind. They have measured the stones—their length, their breadth, and their thickness—and they have told us how irrefragably they infer from that the great state of civilisation which Egypt had then reached, because a great progress must have been made in the mechanical arts to enable

them to raise such stones, the power of raising such being, I believe, now unknown.

But it has been only within very late years that the matter has been looked at from a far different point of view. If that tells us of the high state of mechanical art, and the great intellectual growth of the mind of the labouring classes, it also tells much of Egypt's social degradation, for an ancient historian has told us that the pyramids were raised to be the sepulchres, or monuments, or tombs, of the Egyptian kings. He has told us that they were built by the working classes ; and we are also told that it was by labour forced and compulsory. He has told us that they were driven in gangs, and worked in relays. These things were intended to preserve the names of those ancient kings whose names have come down to us, but of all that belonged to the life of the labouring millions—the thousands and tens of thousands that toiled and bled beneath their task-masters' lash—all the record that remains to us is the number and expenses of the garlic, and onions, and radishes which they consumed, telling us that in those days the individual—the pampered, petted individual—was everything, the working society nothing, the working men being looked upon as beasts of burden, and their importance being estimated merely by the royal provender they consumed.

In the present summer, in the metropolis of our present sovereign, a structure almost as wonderful has been erected, not wonderful for the same reasons, although not less marvellous for the magnitude of the design, the length of time it took in building, or the height of its erection, but marvellous for the integrity, the honesty, the order, the punctuality with which everything was done from first to last, from the Parliament of this country down to the contractors who undertook

the work. Like the pyramids, it was raised at royal command; like them, too, it was raised by the labouring classes; but, unlike those pyramids, it was not raised for royal ostentation: it was erected for the purpose of exhibiting the products of the industry of those labouring thousands out of whom the classes came by whom it was erected. Now this must have struck you—it must have struck every one present at the Exhibition—whether he would or not, when his eye glanced on the enormous crowds that flocked to the building, in which the individual was almost lost, and all you could see was the collective life of thousands. The feeling was, that the building was not for the sake of the well-dressed few, who were lounging here and there, gazing on the jewels of the Queen of Portugal, or gratifying taste in the contemplation of some of the objects of art; but rather for the hard-handed artizan, the bronzed country labourer, the pale-faced mechanic, who were taking their frugal meals in the midst of all this splendour.

Mere nobility, gentility, was nothing there. The banished royalty of France passed through, exciting almost nothing more than curiosity. The royalty of England was second, not first; that august lady, who presided over this country, went into that building to learn as humbly, and far more patiently and systematically, than almost any of her subjects.

Here, then, was the difference between the two cases; and I suppose the feeling of every gentleman who can think and feel was this:—"Of all these thousand productions of the human race, there is scarcely one that I myself can make. It is possible that I could make something like an approximation to understand something of these rifles and guns and revolving pistols. I might be able to tell that this wonderful . . .

exquisite in Europe ; but of all that belongs to the reality of life, of all that can be of human hands, I can make nothing. I belong to the past ; this belongs to the future." I remember that this was impressed on my mind very strongly.

I was passing through that department of the building in which the agricultural implements were exhibited, and there I saw a ploughman contemplating a plough. He was evidently a labourer from the southern counties, with one of those frock coats and those round hats that belong to those districts. I went up to him with that respect which I feel always due to a man who in anything is a superior intelligence himself. I asked him to explain wherein that plough differed from other ploughs, and what was the peculiarity of the invention. He told me, and when he had done, looking at it with almost the same interest and the same adoration with which the painter dwells on a beautiful picture, he said, pointing to the share that turns aside the furrow, "You never saw a curve so beautiful as that." I thanked him, and walked on ; but I had got a lesson. I thought I know something of the dead languages, and of the philosophy of Greece and Rome ; but here is a man who has struck his roots deep into the living actualities of the present. This is his place, not mine ; he is at home where I am but a stranger. I should almost have no business here were it not for the loving heart of sympathy which binds man to man.

Men my brothers—men the workers, ever forming something new,
That which they have done but earnest of the things which they
shall do.

Now then, let us sum up the lessons, the simple lessons that were to be gained from that Exhibition. The first—this was manifesting the dignity of labour ; for a new day has

come in this world, the old day having passed away. The time has passed when a man can be regarded as worth much merely because he enjoys an hereditary name, or is in possession of a certain position in society. Real character is the mark now, and the real law under which our Creator has placed our humanity is becoming abundantly established and recognized. Hereafter and from henceforth what a man has done and what a man can do, that the man is.

The second lesson which was strikingly taught by that Exhibition was the sinking of the individual in society contrasted with the pyramids of Egypt—the thousands toiling for the one—there the individual everything, here nothing. Nay, even in the idea of that structure there was no one man alone ; nay, it was not elaborated by a single nation. It first arose a French idea ; afterwards it was embraced by a few gentlemen of the Art Union, then adopted by Prince Albert, and lastly executed by a number of intelligent minds and hands. There was not even a nation pre-eminent there. There was no everyone occupying his place and none superior to his place. And here is another feature of the time, the raising up the dignity of the humanity that God created. The individual becomes less and less, the world is more and more.

Another thing it told us of. And that is that the day of war was passing, and the day of peace coming, for those rifles and pistols seemed to belong to the past. At the very moment that the Exhibition was going on, one of the greatest statesmen of France was lecturing to the people of Falaise in Normandy. They had chosen by a strange kind of anachronism the wrong time for inaugurating a statue to William the Conqueror ; but he wisely told the people, or left them to infer, that the war polity—I cannot remember

the words, but this was the sentiment, that war was out of date, that war time had passed, and that the time of civilisation, the working time, was coming. He reminded them that Normans and Frenchmen were coming over to England not with the sword, but to bind heart and soul of Englishmen and Frenchmen together. He left them to infer from what he said that there should be no war, that "swords should be turned into ploughshares," that he anticipated the blessed coming advent when "nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

I feel then these were the lessons taught by that structure, these three,—the dignity of labour, the growth of the race, the sinking of the individual;—that the soldier's time has passed, that the workman's time is come. What is all that but bearing on the great conclusion of the subject on which I am to address you—"The Progress of the Working Classes?"

We now assume then, as a fact, that the working classes are progressing towards a higher humanity. Now there are two ways in which they may be treated and addressed. There are two ways in which an heir may be treated when entering on a splendid patrimony. In the one, a sycophant tells him how great he is; how many acres he possesses; what power he has over his tenantry; compliments him on his goodness; tells him that a little goodness in a great man will go a great way. The other is the way of a wise friend, who reminds him that, if he is rich, therefore he has responsibilities; if great, therefore he has duties; and the greater the riches therefore, so much the more bound by that law of our human nature, the law of the creation itself; the law which binds the greatest to serve the weakest

and the meekest. There are two ways in which the working classes can be addressed on coming to the inheritance of their patrimony, so to speak. The one is the way of the sycophant, the flatterer, the demagogue. They tell the working men how great, how powerful they are.

They tell them that in the first and second class carriages of the trains there is nothing but weakness and vapidness ; but in the third there is to be found the worth and the greatness, the intelligence and the honesty of the human race. The wise friends of the people speak not so. They tell them if they are becoming free, now is the time to prepare for freedom, for he alone is free who is free knowingly ; who is master of himself ; who has power over his lower appetites. They tell them that if there are great things and destinies in store for them, therefore by their own self-suspicion, by their own self-government, by their own self-knowledge, by their own self-control, by these alone man can rise to sovereign power.

Now for a further exposition of this subject. There are two things we have to do. I have first to endeavour to define what we mean by the progress of the working classes ; and after that to show, as time will permit, how institutions such as these bear on this progress.

We will make first the answer to the question : " What mean we by the progress of the working classes ? " We do not mean an exemption from the necessity of work. We do not want the labourer and the working men to become ladies or gentlemen, if by ladies and gentlemen we are to understand what is sometimes thought ; people who have nothing to do but to " sit with their hands before them. " To do that would be to degrade them. Rather would we elevate those who do nothing up to the dignity of doing

something, than degrade those who now work down to the lowness, the baseness of doing nothing.

The truth of this is evident. The law of our nature is work. A heathen author has told us that God has given nothing great and good to mortals without great toil. It is impossible to get health without exercise; it is impossible to get strength without muscular force; it is impossible to get mental energy without struggling with difficulties. The man who takes a mere stroll through the flowery paths of literature, just as he might take a stroll over a well-shaven plot of level ground, will never acquire mental strength. Virile strength, in spiritual exercises, is not got by floating and drifting down the stream just where weakness and passion carry us, but by battling against the force of the stream, and struggling against our passions manfully, resistfully, firmly.

If the day were ever to come when the working classes were to be emancipated from labour, that would be the day, not of their blessing, but their curse.

There is one thing more that we do *not* mean by the progress of the working classes, and that is, the abolition of all the distinctions of rank in this world. I am not prepared to say that the elevation of the working man will not make great difference in our present ranks. No doubt it will degrade many who are now elevated, and elevate many who are now depressed; no doubt it will take away much of the bitterness and the exclusiveness that you find in all our modern distinctions, but one thing it unquestionably never will do, because there is a law of the universe against that—abolish all distinctions. And for this reason; superiority of intellect, goodness, refinement of taste, will always bring the higher men together, and draw a line

of separation between them and those who are not like them.

Moreover, if you think of it, you will see that human nature would not be one great, nobler unity, as God has made it, but one great uniformity. For at present these different classes and distinctions, however hardly they may weigh sometimes, do they not produce thus an infinite variety of human character, such as dignity, kindness, politeness ; and on the other hand respect, veneration, self-respect, loyalty ? And all these make up together our manifold humanity. And such you never could have if they were one dead, flat level.

Another thing we do *not* mean by the progress of the working classes—obliteration of difference of condition. Of all the fallacies that demagogues have presented to us, there is, perhaps, none so futile as that exaggeration in which they dwell on inequalities of circumstances and social condition. It is true that inequalities of circumstances must be reduced to something more like equality than they are at present, so far as they prevent those who are working individuals from cultivating all their powers, and so far as they stint free human progress. So far more equality is required ; but it is false to think that in these, and in these chiefly, consists the difference between man and man ; and to dwell on these things as things to be deplored, is to sink the great point of human equality which is within, and to fasten it on where it can never really exist without.

Every man no doubt, in this world, has an equal right to develope all his powers ; but it is false and vulgar to think that because you are not as rich as another, you are not his equal, and that because you have not his rights, you have not your own rights.

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Now, then, to bring the matter to a point, this is what I mean by the "progress of the working classes:"—such a social position for the labouring man as shall tell on his heart, his conscience, and his intellect; such as shall enable him in every way to become a man in the truest and highest sense of the word; a man whose respect is not servility; a man whose religion is not superstition; a man whose loyalty to his sovereign, and whose submission to his master, is not the mere drudgery of dumb, driven cattle. That is the progress of the working classes.

Now I pass on to the second part of that which I proposed, and endeavour to show you how such institutions as these tell on man's progress. The first value of such an institution I hold to be the lesson it gives in self-government. You are not merely governed in this society, you have a part in the government yourselves. It has been the blessing and happiness of the English people that our liberty has grown up, so that the middle and upper classes have gradually practised themselves in self-government, so that in every town and village the middle and upper classes, either as magistrates, or vestrymen, or jurymen, or some of the manifold positions of social life, have known something of the laws and the government of the country.

And so our liberty has grown up step by step; whereas, on the Continent, where the principle was "Everything for the people, nothing by them," when liberty came, the people were found unfit for its enjoyment. Now, the working classes have not yet attained much of this, but their day is coming and, therefore, what is devoutly to be desired by every well-wisher of his country is this, that they should step by step year by year, progress in self-government. I will give you an instance. In the neighbouring town

Then what mean I by the "progress of the working classes?" I will define it as "increased opportunities of developing all the man's heart, intellect, and conscience." It is not every man's born right in this world to be rich ; it is not every man's born right to be a possessor of the soil ; it is not every man's right of birth to have a share at all in government. But it is every man's born right to be allowed, and not hindered, from cultivating every power that his Maker has given him.

Let us take the case of the heart, our human affections. If the state of the labourer be such, if he be so ground down with penury that the loss of a child comes to him as a thing almost welcome, because there is one mouth less to feed, then it is plain that there is a wrong somewhere, a wrong done to him by society in its social institutions ; or a wrong done to him in this, that he has not been taught self-control ; he has not been taught that needful restraint over self that would enable him to abstain from marriage until he has obtained a competency. In either case there is room for progress.

Take again the case of intellect. If the labourer returns home at night, soul-worn and wasted with his toil, so that he cannot give his mind to thought or self-improvement ; or if, on the other hand, he has not the means and opportunities, though he has the powers, then again that is a wrong, and there is room for progress.

We will take again the case of conscience. If the labourer's state be this, his home so poor and small, that the whole family have but one room to sleep in, then all the delicacies and all the proprieties of human life being out of the question, it is vain to attempt to cultivate that man's conscience.

Now, then, to bring the matter to a point, this is what I mean by the "progress of the working classes :"—such a social position for the labouring man as shall tell on his heart, his conscience, and his intellect ; such as shall enable him in every way to become a man in the truest and highest sense of the word ; a man whose respect is not servility ; a man whose religion is not superstition ; a man whose loyalty to his sovereign, and whose submission to his master, is not the mere drudgery of dumb, driven cattle. That is the progress of the working classes.

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I will give you an instance. In the neighbouring town

of Brighton a similar institution was established. It was established on larger and broader ground than yours, and for this reason. In a large town, where innumerable shades of opinion prevail, to have had anything like restraint would have been to make it mere class-work ; and, therefore, the only admission was the payment of a weekly penny. There was one rule, a suicidal rule as the result proved—that is, from a jealousy which sometimes exists in the lower class, a jealousy or dread of those above them, a law was passed prohibiting from all management of the institution those who were honorary members, that is, gentlemen and men of fortune, who, from well-wishing to the people, gave them money, but were not permitted to take a share in the government. It was easy to see that a collision would take place. I was not sorry when it did take place.

After a time there were found on the table a number of blasphemous and infidel publications. Some of the committee had proposed these ; others had refused their admission. A public meeting was summoned ; a great deal of ribaldry and blasphemy went on ; they received no assistance from the class above them, unless that was assistance which was merely an address made by one person to whom they were willing to listen, and who endeavoured to show their faults. The matter was contested ; it lasted for weeks and months ; and then the turbulent, the violent, and I may almost say infidel party, seized on all the property, the maps, the clock, the books, and the forms, and carried it off. The others were prepared to retaliate ; but to their honour be it said, one of them stood up and said, “ Let us not do this ; it is better to suffer wrong than to do wrong.” And they reconstructed their society ; they rescinded that rule ; they permitted a class richer than themselves to assist

in the management of the institution, and to give the benefit of their sympathy and advice. And now they are going on most triumphantly.

Why do I quote that? Suppose it had been the other way. Suppose a number of gentlemen to have joined together, men of property, and given them their books, drawn up their rules, and allowed no one to enter but those who would have conformed to the rules—that would have been the foreign principle, “Everything *for* them and nothing by them.” I daresay intellectually, the working men might have been as well off; but the lesson of self-control, self-government, and providence and foresight, which they have learned, would have been lost for ever. And is it of such men, so trained, that the revolutionists of future ages can come? Is it by such men that the liberties of England can be shaken?

Now, the second is the principle which this institution appears to expand and sympathise. There is an old axiom that man is great and good in proportion to the expansion and extent of his sympathy. The man whose eye is ever on himself is the smallest of mankind. Next is the man whose eye is taken off himself and cast on his family. It is a step further in human progress. When more expanded into clanships, trades' unions, or art societies, it is still a step forward. When it passes to patriotism, love of country, it is a step further still. When patriotism passes into something higher, it becomes a generous expansive sympathy, which can be touched by anything that touches the interests of Humanity.

And now, if I may say it with all reverence on such an occasion, it is in this way God has educated his world. He began with an individual, and first expanded his feeling from

himself by giving one in whom selfishness passed away, and selfishness was found again in the being and blessedness of another. And then came domestic life, an expansion still again. And then there came clans and feelings of tribes and nations. And that passed afterwards into that which we call our blessed Christianity—love for the human race.

Now it is on this precisely that our English character is singularly deficient. It arises partly from our peculiar position, that is, we are an island. Foreigners rarely come among us. On the Continent an infinite variety of foreigners pass every year. It is not so here. Consequently we have been slow in getting out of our national prejudices. Fifty years ago, every boy in the country felt it to be his duty to hate a Frenchman, was taught to think that every Englishman was equal to three Frenchmen. Nay, in this day, we hear people speak as if morality was almost confined to England, just as if our national institutions were the only ones in this world of God's worthy of admiration, and our religion the only true one.

After saying this, I almost regret to be obliged to come down to a thing so simple as I am about to say. One step, a very small one, but still a step, is given to a working man for getting over his prejudices in an institution like this, by the mere perusal of a public newspaper ; for I think it will be abundantly established that it is a step for a working man to get away from the petty squabbles of his village, whether it be a Churchman and Dissenter, an Evangelical or a Tractarian, or whether it be concerning an election of churchwarden, to some large question of national or even of still larger interest relating to some European country.

Let me give you another instance. Among those illustrious foreigners who have lately come to our shores was one who was

surrounded by the admiration and veneration of the working classes. From the very moment the ex-dictator of Hungary landed at Southampton till he left these shores, it was one continued scene of admiration and perpetual flattery. I am not going to enter into the Hungarian question. I am not going to decide on Louis Kossuth, or his claims to our admiration. I do not pretend to say whether he was all that his friends represented him—a man of honour, and a hero; or, on the other hand, what the *Times* furiously and vehemently represents him to be—a mere charlatan, a demagogue or a Red Republican. For our present purpose it matters not. He may have been one or the other; I care not. It matters not *who* was worshipped, but *what* was worshipped. It matters not what was the subject of admiration, but why it was admired. It was not as a demagogue or Red Republican that the working classes of this country honoured that man; for the mere fact that men in . . . with no object of personal advantage—the ironfounders and the brassworkers of this country gave all their homage to one of whose history they had read, and the struggles of whose country through the newspapers they had sympathised in, gave him that homage because they believed him a hero, a true man, an oppressed man, and an outcast. To know that, and not to feel touched with it, and not to feel love and veneration for the country in which such a feeling could be produced, I envy not the man whose heart is so narrow, or whose heart has been shut up by mere party prejudice.

I see another advantage in these institutions. They fit men for their work. As I have said I don't want to make the working classes ladies and gentlemen, nor to encourage them to do nothing. The law of this life is "work." I believe the cry is almost passed away, that education unfits a

man for his office, or duties, or work. I suppose we almost all feel that the better a man is educated, the better fitted he is even for the lowest affairs. I suppose that we all feel that the farmer is not a worse farmer for knowing a little of chemistry, and that he is a much better farmer for knowing much ; that if he can tell, for example, the laws which regulate the composition of soils, why one manure is good and another evil for his farm, upon what principles decomposition takes place, that then he will be an intellectual farmer, far more, and a far better farmer, than if he had merely walked in the good old ways of his ignorant forefathers. And I suppose we all feel that the artisan who knows something of the properties of matter and the laws of motion is not merely likely to pass from a mere artisan to an inventor, but as a mere mechanic and a mere worker he will do his work better, for every man does his work better when he understands the principles, than he does when he simply works by rules.

Now, there is another class to whom intelligence is valuable, even in their occupation. I mean domestic servants. Now here we are more likely to be met by an outcry. There are well-meaning people who say, "If you refine the working classes, what shall we do for servants and apprentices?" We will pass by the absurd character of this objection, for I should think they are not aware of what they mean. They do not mean that human progress is to wait, in order that they may be saved from waiting on themselves. They do not mean to say that human minds are to be dwarfed, and human souls stunted, in order that their rooms may be well cleaned, or their articles well sold, and that they may gain in a higher degree than they otherwise would have gained.

But passing by this, I will look at the matter in another

way. I am persuaded that even for domestic servants, high intelligence would qualify them for those duties. All experience tells us that the man who knows the most is the best servant, for there is no conception more false than this—that ignorance is the same thing as innocence; that stunted intellect and low mental powers are the soil out of which a moral or even honest servant is to be raised.

A servant of a friend of mine exhibited remarkable mechanical powers, and his master gave him a workshop, and purchased for him expensive tools, and a turning-lathe. His leisure hours are now passed in making articles of marvellous invention and beauty; and the remainder of his time is given to his master's service. I am sure that any man who, like myself, has been a partaker of his master's hospitality, would not have seen in the humble demeanour of the man who waits at table, or in the arrangements of the house, anything from which he could draw the conception that being a highly educated mechanic unfitted a man to be a domestic servant.

There is one other way in which it appears to me education will fit a man for his office—I mean by the refinement of his taste. A man's condition is made by a man's own mind. It is the mind that makes the palace and that makes the hovel.

I daresay that many of us have seen some person who has fallen from a higher life down to a lower sphere, and wondered how a little elegance and taste can throw a grace around a few miserable rooms, whereas the neighbouring tradesman with twice the income has not half the enjoyment.

This is a point in which our English character is deficient. I mean our sensible want of taste. In the Great Exhibition that was remarkably prominent. Whoever examined the

harmony of colour in the French
and compared them with the barbarous discord of colour, and the want of elegance and grace and taste in all we did, must have felt with deep regret how far this country was behind-hand. One of the French jewellers and silversmiths exhibited a most remarkable and most beautiful object made in Paris, and he stated that the question put to him by an Englishman who wanted to become the purchaser was, "How many ounces of silver are in it?" He had no eye for the beauty and grace of the object; his idea was the mass of metal, the ingot of silver. Of all nations, we are perhaps most fond of wealth; of all nations perhaps we have the least idea of the enjoyment of wealth.

Only conceive what a grace, what enjoyment of life there might be, if the farmer and mechanic had more of this taste! The labourer's cottage might exhibit a few flowers at the door, a few well-selected prints on the wall, a few well-selected books on the shelves, and a little of that grace which comes from an educated and refined mind. How different life would be!

I will give you two instances. The first came under my own personal observation, the other was furnished by a friend. A few years ago I was living in Suffolk, when an officer of the Engineers was sent down by the Government of the country to make the Ordnance Survey. He had been quartered in Ireland eleven years, and consequently the greater part of his theodolite bearers and chain bearers were Irishmen. As I was then preparing for a military life, I used to go out with these men, to fit myself for military surveying, and what struck me in conversation with the Irishmen was that the of the Celtic softened and ameliorated the hardships of life. For whereas the

Englishman was grumbling at his small pay and insufficient lodging, the Irishman threw a poetry and a life and happiness over it. I remember asking one respecting the misery of his countrymen, and he told me many a sad, sad story; and amongst others I recollect his telling me that the cabins were so miserable where he had gone to take shelter, that he said the poor creatures could count the stars as they were lying in their beds. I think no Englishman would speak like that. He would have talked of the dripping rain which the broken roof let in from the four quarters of the heavens; but no Englishman, I imagine, would lie awake at night thinking of the heavens and counting the stars; and I think you will agree with me that the man who could lie on his bed and count the stars, was, to some extent, independent of outward circumstances.

A friend of mine was travelling last summer in the counties of Westmoreland and Cumberland—that beautiful Lake district; and she made it her business to examine all the schools, being deeply interested in education. In almost all she was disappointed. She found the stolidness and the dull look that characterise our working classes. In one she discovered an extraordinary difference. There was an intelligence, a brightness, and a happy look; and the children went through their geography easily, tracing the rivers to the ocean, naming the cities on the way, telling the geological formations, and how it was this and that place produced such a thing, and the quality of the soil, and how all this bore on the character of the inhabitants. She made the acquaintance of the schoolmaster. He had been instructed at White-lands, one of our training seminaries. She asked him how it came to pass that a man of his education and refinement above the common run was found buried in such an out-of-

the-way place, and with a small income. He collected himself, and said, "Why, the truth is, that when I first took the place I was on the eve of being married, and we calculated that domestic happiness in scenery so glorious as this was worth an additional £40 a year of income." There are people who would say to me, "Why speak to the working classes of refinement and beauty and taste and sentiment, when all you have to do is to teach them how to get meat and drink and clothing?" But I think the veriest son of clay would be tempted to qualify his verdict if it could be proved that merely as a matter of pounds, shillings, and pence, this refinement might be weighed, and if it could be shown that a sense of the beauty of God's universe was equivalent to £40 a-year.

Now, working men of Hurst, I calculate it must have struck many of you that much has been omitted. I have not put before you the highest motives. I have not led you to the loftiest atmosphere of thought. I have left this unsaid designedly—advisedly ; for there is a propriety, a fitness, in things. The platform is not the pulpit. We are not erecting a church, or inaugurating a college ; but merely setting up a Reading Institution, and therefore advisedly I have abstained from those high and sacred topics. But yet, if any one of us should forget that all those things whereof I have the progress of the Working Classes, the progress of humanity itself, is but subsidiary to a higher fact—the Life of God in the soul of man ; the Life of God in the individual, the Life of God in society ; then a work, even so trifling as this, the setting up a Reading Institution, would be practical Atheism.

THE EDUCATION OF THE HUMAN RACE.

By GOTTHOLD EPHRAIM LESSING.

“When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child ; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.”—ST. PAUL.

“ Our little systems have their day ;
They have their day, and cease to be :
They are but broken lights of Thee,
And Thou, O Lord, art more than they.

“ We have but faith ; we cannot know ;
For knowledge is of things we see ;
And yet we trust it comes from Thee,
A beam in darkness : let it grow.

“ Let knowledge grow from more to more,
But more of reverence in us dwell ;
That mind and soul, according well,
May make one music, as before.

“ But vaster. We are fools and slight ;
We mock Thee when we do not fear ;
But help Thy foolish ones to bear ;
Help Thy vain worlds to bear Thy light.”

TENNYSON.

PREFACE.

IT is of some importance to understand rightly what principle really underlies the Divine Education of the Human Race, because we may be sure that such should be our rule in training and educating each Individual member.

Two ideas seem now in force; one a combination of Hope and Fear, by which some teachers think it best to educate—Fear of a Material Hell, Hope of a not much less Material Heaven. These are the ultimates, up to which the lesser rewards and punishments lead.

There is also the doctrine of the Divine Paternity of each individual soul, in virtue of which every member of the Race can be appealed to as a Child of God, and be urged to live as becomes such high relationship.

The writer of this Treatise thinks the latter is the true mode of dealing with the subject; and although he calls not on any hasty traveller, who may be impatient to reach his night quarters, to turn aside from the eminence from which he is gazing—yet he believes that he sees somewhat more than the prescribed road of his time: that he sees somewhat of the plan by which the Race has hitherto been educated: and he obtains, therefrom, some hints and suggestions as to its future destiny.

He does not offer these thoughts as the sum and substance of the matter, but rather as suggestions tending towards the discovery of fuller truth through some other minds. And in this mood he seems to harmonize well with those who are expecting, not a *new* Revelation, but an ever-growing development of the *meaning* of that with which God has already furnished us: for assuredly we have not yet

fathomed the infinite depths of the Divine Love for His Creatures. In our "Schemes of Redemption," and "Plans of Salvation," we have not yet reached the full meaning of that name under which God has revealed Himself in these latter days—OUR FATHER.

In our eagerness to prove the damnation of every soul who does not believe this or that dogma, we are in danger of forgetting that Christianity is either a Gospel of Salvation, or is valueless: and we overlook the inevitable necessity that the human mind must pass through phases of ignorance, doubt, and even error, before it can become capable of receiving pure truth.

All the laws of the Universe have had existence from the beginning, yet how recently is it that Electricity has been discovered? and do we yet know all which this power implies?

Did the earth ever do other than go round the sun? yet how long is it since man found this out?

And are the spiritual truths of man's nature more easily discerned than the physical phenomena which surround him? Why should there not be development in these as well as in those?

Each little sect or religion has, doubtless, had some germ of the truth within it, which has rendered it subservient to the great purpose of fertilizing the world—but so long as the professors of either of them think that they are favoured Children of the Divine Father, whom He regards with a complacency with which He does not view the rest of Humanity, so long is the fulness of God's idea not attained by them.

There may be much in this little Treatise which will be perplexing to men who merely read by the light of established

and recognised formulas; much which may sound like heresy to those who believe only that which can be found to be contained within the Articles and Creeds of their own school; but to the honest, earnest Enquirer, it may suggest very profitable currents of thought, in which he may let his reason and imagination flow together, possible in one of these flowing at last into the great ocean of Truth itself.

THE EDUCATION OF THE HUMAN RACE.

I

THAT which Education is to the Individual, Revelation is to the Race.

2

EDUCATION is Revelation coming to the Individual Man; and Revelation is Education which has come, and is yet coming, to the Human Race.

3

WHETHER it can be of any advantage to the science of instruction to contemplate Education in this point of view, I will not here inquire; but in Theology it may unquestionably be of great advantage, and may remove many difficulties, if Revelation be conceived of as the Educator of Humanity.

4

EDUCATION gives to Man nothing which he might not educe out of himself; it gives him that which he might educe out of himself, only quicker and more easily. In the same way too, Revelation gives nothing to the human species, which the human reason left to itself might not

attain; only it has given, and still gives to it, the most important of these things earlier.

5

AND just as in Education, it is not a matter of indifference in what order the powers of a man are developed, as it cannot impart to a man all at once; so was God also necessitated to maintain a certain order, and a certain measure in His Revelation.

6

EVEN if the first man were furnished at once with a conception of the One God; yet it was not possible that this conception, imparted, and not gained by thought, should subsist long in its clearness. As soon as the Human Reason, left to itself, began to elaborate it, it broke up the one Immeasurable into many Measurables, and gave a note or sign of mark to every one of these parts.

7

HENCE naturally arose polytheism and idolatry. And who can say how many millions of years human reason would have been bewildered in these errors, even though in places and times there were individual men who recognised them *as* errors, had it not pleased God to afford it a better direction by means of a new impulse?

8

BUT when He neither could nor would reveal Himself any more to *each* individual man, He selected an individual People for His special education; and that exactly the most rude and the most unruly, in order to begin with it from the very commencement.

9

THIS was the Hebrew People, respecting whom we do not in the least know what kind of Divine Worship they had in Egypt. For so despised a race of slaves was not permitted to take part in the worship of the Egyptians ; and the God of their fathers was entirely unknown to them.

10

IT is possible that the Egyptians had expressly prohibited the Hebrews from having a God or Gods, perhaps they had forced upon them the belief that their despised race had no God, no Gods, that to have a God or Gods was the prerogative of the superior Egyptians only, and this may have been so held in order to have the power of tyrannising over them with a greater show of fairness. Do Christians even now do much better with their slaves ?

11

To this rude people God caused Himself to be announced first, simply as "the God of their fathers," in order to make them acquainted and familiar with the idea of a God belonging to them also, and to begin with confidence in Him.

12

THROUGH the miracles with which He led them out of Egypt, and planted them in Canaan, He testified of Himself to them as a God mightier than any other.

13

AND as He proceeded, demonstrating Himself to be the Mightiest of all, which only One can be, He gradually accustomed them thus to the idea of THE ONE.

14

BUT how far was this conception of The One, below the true transcendental conception of the One which Reason learnt to derive, so late with certainty, from the conception of the Infinite One !

15

ALTHOUGH the best of the people were already more or less approaching the true conception of the One only, the people as a whole could not for a long time elevate themselves to it. And this was the sole true reason why they so often abandoned their one God, and expected to find the One, *i.e.*, as they meant, the Mightiest, in some God or other, belonging to another people.

16

BUT of what kind of moral education was a people so raw, so incapable of abstract thoughts, and so entirely in their childhood, capable ? Of none other but such as is adapted to the age of children, an education by rewards and punishments addressed to the senses.

17

HERE too Education and Revelation meet together. As yet God could give to His people no other religion, no other law than one through obedience to which they might hope to be happy, or through disobedience to which they must fear to be unhappy. For as yet their regards went no further than this earth. They knew of no immortality of the soul ; they yearned after no life to come. But now to reveal these things to one whose reason had as yet so little growth, what could it have been but the same fault in the Divine Rule as is committed by the schoolmaster who

chooses to hurry his pupil too rapidly, and boast of his progress, rather than thoroughly to ground him ?

18

BUT it will be asked, to what purpose was this education of so rude a people, a people with whom God had to begin so entirely from the beginning? I reply, in order that in the process of time He might employ particular members of this nation as the Teachers of other people. He was bringing up in them the future Teachers of the human race. It was Jews who became their teachers, none but Jews ; only men out of a people so brought up, could be their teachers.

19

FOR to proceed. When the Child by dint of blows and caresses had grown and was now come to years of understanding, the Father sent it at once into foreign countries : and here it recognised at once the Good which in its Father's house it had possessed, and not been conscious of.

20

WHILE God guided His chosen people through all the degrees of a childlike education, the other nations of the earth had gone on by the light of reason. The most part had remained far behind the chosen people. Only a few had got before them. And this, too, takes place with children who are allowed to grow up left to themselves : many remain quite raw, some educate themselves even to an astonishing degree.

21

But as these more fortunate few prove nothing against the use and the necessity of Education, so the few heathen nations, who even appear to have made a start in the know-

ledge of God before the chosen people, prove nothing against a Revelation. The Child of Education begins with slow yet sure footsteps ; it is late in overtaking many a more happily organised child of nature ; but it *does* overtake it ; and thenceforth can never be distanced by it again.

22

SIMILARLY—Putting aside the doctrine of the Unity of God, which in a way is found, and in a way is not found, in the books of the Old Testament—that the doctrine of immortality at least is not discoverable in it, is wholly foreign to it, that all doctrine connected therewith of reward and punishment in a future life, proves just as little against the Divine origin of these books. Notwithstanding the absence of these doctrines the account of miracles and prophecies may be perfectly true. For let us suppose that these doctrines were not only wanting therein, but even that they were not at all true ; let us suppose that for mankind all was over in this life ; would the Being of God be for this reason less demonstrated ? Would God be for this less at liberty, would it less become Him to take immediate charge of the temporal fortunes of any people out of this perishable race ? The miracles which He performed for the Jews, the prophecies which He caused to be recorded through them, were surely not for the few mortal Jews, in whose time they had happened and been recorded : He had his intentions therein in reference to the whole Jewish people, to the entire Human Race, which, perhaps, is destined to remain on earth for ever, though every individual Jew and every individual man die for ever.

23

ONCE more, the absence of those doctrines in the writings

of the Old Testament proves nothing against their Divinity. Moses was sent from God even though the sanction of his law only extended to this life. For why should it extend further? He was surely sent only to the Israelitish people, to the Israelitish people *of that time*, and his commission was perfectly adapted to the knowledge, capacities, yearnings of the *then existing* Israelitish people, as well as to the destination of that which belonged to the future. And this is sufficient.

24

So far ought Warburton to have gone, and no farther. But that learned man overdrew the bow. Not content that the absence of these doctrines was no *discredit* to the Divine mission of Moses, it must even be a *proof* to him of the Divinity of the mission. And if he had only sought this proof in the adaptation of such a law to such a people!

But he betook himself to the hypothesis of a miraculous system continued in an unbroken line from Moses to Christ, according to which, God had made every individual Jew exactly happy or unhappy, in proportion as his obedience or disobedience to the law deserved. He would have it that this miraculous system had compensated for the want of those doctrines (of eternal rewards and punishments, &c.) without which no state can subsist; and that such a compensation even proved what that want at first sight appeared to negative.

25

How well it was that Warburton could by no argument prove or even make likely this continuous miracle, in which he placed the existence of the Israelitish Theocracy! For could he have done so, in truth, he could then, and not till then,

have made the difficulty really insuperable, to me at least. For that which was meant to prove the Divine character of the Mission of Moses, would have rendered the matter itself doubtful, which God, it is true, did not intend *then* to reveal ; but which, on the other hand, He certainly would not render unattainable.

26

I EXPLAIN myself by that which is a picture of Revelation. A Primer for children may fairly pass over in silence this or that important piece of the knowledge or art which it expounds, respecting which the Teacher judged that it is not yet fitted for the capacities of the children for whom he was writing. But it must contain absolutely nothing which blocks up the way towards the knowledge which is held back, or misleads the children from it. Rather far, all the approaches towards it must be carefully left open ; and to lead them away from even one of these approaches, or to cause them to enter it later than they need, would alone be enough to change the mere imperfection of such a primer into an actual fault.

27

IN the same way, in the writings of the Old Testament those primers for the rude Israelitish people, unpractised in thought, the doctrines of the immortality of the soul, and future recompenses, might be fairly left out : but they were bound to contain nothing which could have even procrastinated the progress of the people, for whom they were written, in their way to this grand truth. And to say but a small thing, what could have more procrastinated it than the promise of such a miraculous recompense in this life ? A promise made by Him who promises nothing that He does not perform.

28

FOR although in the unequal distribution of the goods of this life, virtue and vice seem to be taken little into consideration, although this unequal distribution does not exactly afford a strong proof of the immortality of the soul and of a life to come, in which this difficulty will be resolved hereafter, it is certain that without this difficulty the human understanding would not for a long time, perhaps never, have arrived at better or firmer proofs. For what was to impel it to seek for these better proofs? Mere curiosity?

29

AN Israelite here and there, no doubt, might have extended to every individual member of the entire commonwealth those promises and threatenings which belonged to it as a whole, and be firmly persuaded that whosoever should be pious must also be happy, and that whoever was unhappy must be bearing the penalty of his wrong-doing, which penalty would forthwith change itself into blessing, as soon as he abandoned his sin. Such a one appears to have written Job, for the plan of it is entirely in this spirit.

30

BUT daily experience could not possibly be permitted to confirm this belief, or else it would have been all over, for ever, with the people who had this experience, so far as all recognition and reception was concerned of the truth as yet unfamiliar to them. For if the pious were absolutely happy, and it also of course was a necessary part of his happiness that his satisfaction should be broken by no uneasy thoughts of death, and that he should die old, and satisfied with life to the full : how could he yearn after another life ? and how

could he reflect upon a thing after which he did not yearn? But if the pious did not reflect thereupon, who then should reflect? The transgressor? he who felt the punishment of his misdeeds, and if he cursed this life must have so gladly renounced that other existence?

31

MUCH less did it signify if an Israelite here and there directly and expressly denied the immortality of the soul and future recompense, on account of the law having no reference thereto. The denial of an individual, had it even been a Solomon, did not arrest the progress of the general reason, and was even in itself a proof that the nation had now come a great step nearer the truth. For individuals only deny what the many are bringing into consideration; and to bring into consideration that, concerning which no one troubled himself at all before, is half way to knowledge.

32

LET us also acknowledge that it is a heroic obedience to obey the laws of God simply because they are God's laws, and not because He has promised to reward the obedience to them here and there; to obey them even though there be an entire despair of future recompense, and uncertainty respecting a temporal one.

33

MUST not a people educated in this heroic obedience towards God have been destined, must they not have been capable beyond all others of executing Divine purposes of quite a special character? Let the soldier, who pays blind obedience to his leader, become also convinced of his leader's

wisdom, and then say what that leader may not undertake to achieve with him.

34

As yet the Jewish people had revered in their Jehovah rather the mightiest than the wisest of all Gods ; as yet they had rather feared Him as a jealous God than loved Him : a proof this too, that the conceptions which they had of their eternal One God were not exactly the right conceptions which we should have of God. However, now the time was come that these conceptions of theirs were to be expanded, ennobled, rectified, to accomplish which God availed Himself of a quite natural means, a better and more correct measure, by which it got the opportunity of appreciating Him.

35

INSTEAD of, as hitherto, appreciating Him in contrast with the miserable idols of the small neighbouring peoples, with whom they lived in constant rivalry, they began, in captivity under the wise Persians, to measure Him against the "Being of all beings," such as a more disciplined reason recognised and revered.

36

REVELATION had guided their reason, and now, all at once, reason gave clearness to their revelation.

37

THIS was the first reciprocal influence which these two (Reason and Revelation) exercised on one another; and so far is the mutual influence from being unbecoming to the author of them both, that without it either of them would have been useless.

38

THE child, sent abroad, saw other children who knew more, who lived more becomingly, and asked itself, in confusion, "Why do I not know that too? Why do I not live so too? Ought I not to have been taught and admonished of all this in my father's house?" Thereupon it again sought out its primer, which had long been thrown into a corner, in order to throw off the blame upon the primer. But behold, it discovers that the blame does not rest upon the book, that the shame is solely its own, for not having, long ago, known this very thing, and lived in this very way.

39

SINCE the Jews, by this time, through the medium of the pure Persian doctrine, recognised in their Jehóvah, not simply the greatest of all national deities, but GOD; and since they could the more readily find Him and indicate Him to others in their sacred writings, inasmuch as He was really in them; and since they manifested as great an aversion for sensuous representations, or at all events were instructed in these scriptures to have an aversion to them as great as the Persians had always felt; what wonder that they found favour in the eyes of Cyrus, with a Divine worship which he recognised as being, no doubt, far below pure Sabeism, but yet far above the rude idolatries which in its stead had taken possession of the forsaken land of the Jews?

40

THUS enlightened respecting the treasures which they had possessed without knowing it, they returned, and became quite another people, whose first care it was to give permanency to this illumination amongst themselves. Soon an

apostacy and idolatry among them was out of question.* For it is possible to be faithless to a national deity, but never to God, after He has once been recognised.

41

THE theologians have tried to explain this complete change in the Jewish people in a different way; and one, who has well demonstrated the insufficiency of these explanations, at last was for giving us, as the true account—"the visible fulfilment of the prophecies which had been spoken and written respecting the Babylonish captivity and the restoration from it." But even this reason can be only so far the true one, as it presupposes the, by this time, exalted ideas of God. The Jews must by this time have recognised that to do miracles, and to predict the future, belonged only to God, both of which they had ascribed formerly to false idols, by which it came to pass that even miracles and prophecies had hitherto made so weak an impression upon them.

42

DOUBTLESS the Jews were made more acquainted with the doctrine of immortality among the Chaldeans and Persians. They became more familiar with it too in the schools of the Greek philosophers in Egypt.

43

HOWEVER, as this doctrine was not in the same condition in reference to their Scriptures that the doctrine of God's Unity and Attributes was—since the former were entirely overlooked by that sensual people, while the latter would be sought for :—and since, too, for the former previous exercising was necessary, and as yet there had been only *hints*

and *allusions*, the faith of the immortality of the soul could naturally never be the faith of the entire people. It was, and continued to be, only the creed of a certain section of them.

44

AN example of what I mean by "previous exercising" for the doctrine of immortality, is the Divine threatenings of punishing the misdeeds of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation. This accustomed the fathers to live in thought with their remotest posterity, and to feel, as it were, beforehand, the misfortune which they had brought upon these guiltless ones.

45

By an allusion I mean that which was intended only to excite curiosity and to occasion questions. As, for instance, the oft-recurring mode of expression, describing death by "he was gathered to his fathers."

46

By a "hint" I mean that which already contains any germ out of which the, as yet, held back truth allows itself to be developed. Of this character was the inference of Christ from the naming of God "the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." This hint appears to me to be unquestionably capable of being worked out into a strong proof.

47

IN such previous exertitions, allusions, hints, consists the *positive* perfection of a primer ; just as the above-mentioned peculiarity of not throwing difficulties or hindrances in the way to the suppressed truth, constitutes the *negative* perfection of such a book.

48

ADD to all this the clothing and the style.

1. The clothing of abstract truths, which were not entirely to be passed over, in allegories and instructive single circumstances, which were narrated as actual occurrences. Of this character are the Creation under the image of growing Day ; the Origin of Evil in the story of the Forbidden Tree ; the source of the variety of languages in the history of the Tower of Babel, &c.

49

2. The style—sometimes plain and simple, sometimes poetical, throughout full of tautologies, but of such a kind as practise sagacity, since they sometimes appear to be saying something else, and yet the same thing ; sometimes the same thing over again, and yet to signify or to be capable of signifying, at the bottom, something else :—

50

AND then you have all the properties of excellence which belong to a primer for a childlike people, as well as for children.

51

BUT every primer is only for a certain age. To delay the child, that has outgrown it, longer in it than it was intended for, is hurtful. For to be able to do this in a way in any sort profitable, you must insert into it more than there is really in it, and extract from it more than it can contain. You must look for and make too much of allusions and hints ; squeeze allegories too closely ; interpret examples too circumstantially ; press too much upon words. This gives the child a petty, crooked, hairsplitting understanding :

it makes him full of mysteries, superstitions ; full of contempt for all that is comprehensible and easy.

52

THE very way in which the Rabbins handled *their* sacred books ! The very character which they thereby imparted to the character of their people !

53

A BETTER Instructor must come and tear the exhausted Primer from the child's hands. CHRIST came !

54

THAT portion of the human race which God had willed to comprehend in one Educational plan, was ripe for the second step of Education. He had, however, only willed to comprehend on such a plan, one which by language, mode of action, government, and other natural and political relationships, was already united in itself.

55

THAT is, this portion of the human race was come so far in the exercise of its reason, as to need, and to be able to make use of, nobler and worthier motives of moral action than temporal rewards and punishments, which had hitherto been its guides. The child had become a youth. Sweetmeats and toys have given place to the budding desire to be as free, as honoured, and as happy as its elder brother.

56

FOR a long time, already, the best individuals of that portion of the human race (called above the eldest brother) had been accustomed to let themselves be ruled by the

shadow of such nobler motives. The Greek and Roman did everything to live on after this life, even if it were only in the remembrance of their fellow-citizens.

57

It was time that another *true* life to be expected after this should gain an influence over the youth's actions.

58

AND so Christ was the first certain practical Teacher of the immortality of the soul.

59

THE first *certain* Teacher. Certain, through the prophecies which were fulfilled in Him; certain, through the miracles which He achieved; certain, through His own revival after a death through which He had sealed His doctrine. Whether we can still *prove* this revival, these miracles, I put aside, as I leave on one side *who* the Person of Christ was. All *that* may have been at that time of great weight for the *reception* of His doctrine, but it is now no longer of the same importance for the recognition of the *truth* of His doctrine.

60

THE first *practical* Teacher. For it is one thing to conjecture, to wish, and to believe the immortality of the soul, as a philosophic speculation: quite another thing to direct the inner and outer acts by it.

61

AND this at least Christ was the first to teach. For although, already before Him, the belief had been introduced

among many nations, that bad actions have yet to be punished in that life; yet they were only such actions as were injurious to civil society, and consequently, too, had already had their punishment in civil society. To enforce an inward purity of heart in reference to another life, was reserved for Him alone.

62

HIS disciples have faithfully propagated these doctrines: and if they had even had no other merit than that of having effected a more general publication, among other nations, of a Truth which Christ had appeared to have destined only for the Jews, yet would they have, even on that account alone, to be reckoned among the Benefactors and Fosterers of the Human Race.

63

IF, however, they transplanted this one great Truth together with other doctrines, whose truth was less enlightening, whose usefulness was of a less exalted character, how could it be otherwise? Let us not blame them for this, but rather seriously examine whether these very commingled doctrines have not become a new *impulse of direction* for human reason.

64

AT least, it is already clear that the New Testament Scriptures, in which these doctrines after some time were found preserved, have afforded, and still afford, the second better Primer for the race of man.

65

FOR seven hundred years past they have exercised human reason more than all other books, and enlightened it more,

were it even only through the light which the **human** reason itself threw into them.

66

It would have been impossible for any other book to become so generally known among different **nations**: and indisputably, the fact that modes of thought so **diverse** from each other have been occupied on the same book, has helped on the human reason more than if every **nation** had had its *own* Primer specially for itself.

67

It was also highly necessary that each people for a period should hold this Book as the *ne plus ultra* of their knowledge. For the youth must consider his Primer as the first of all books, that the impatience to finish this book may not hurry him on to things for which he has, as yet, laid no basis.

68

AND one thing is also of the greatest importance even now. Thou abler spirit, who art fretting and restless over the last page of the Primer, beware! Beware of letting thy weaker fellow-scholars mark what thou perceivest afar, or what thou art beginning to see!

69

UNTIL these weaker fellow-scholars are up with thee, rather return once more back into this Primer, and examine whether that which thou takest only for duplicates of the method, for a blunder in the teaching, is not perhaps something more.

70

THOU hast seen in the childhood of the human race,

respecting the doctrine of God's unity, that God makes immediate revelations of mere truths of reason, or has permitted and caused pure truths of reason to be taught, for some time, as truths of immediate revelation, in order to promulgate them the more rapidly, and ground them the more firmly.

71

THOU experiencest in the boyhood of the Race the same thing in reference to the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. It is *preached* in the better Primer as a Revelation, instead of *taught* as a result of human reason.

72

As we by this time can dispense with the Old Testament in reference to the doctrine of the unity of God, and as we are by degrees beginning also to be less dependent on the New Testament in reference to the immortality of the soul, might there not in this Book also be other truths of the same sort prefigured—mirrored, as it were—which we are to marvel at, as revelations, exactly so long as until the time shall come when reason shall have learned to educe them out of its other demonstrated truths, and bind them up with them?

73

FOR instance, the doctrine of the Trinity. How if this doctrine should at last, after endless errors right and left, only bring men on the road to recognise that God cannot possibly be One in the sense in which finite things are one, that even His unity must be a transcendent unity, which does not exclude a sort of plurality? Must not God at least have the most perfect conception of Himself, *i.e.*, a conception in which is found everything which is in Him? But

would everything be found in it which is in Him, if a mere conception—a mere possibility—were found even of His necessary reality as well as of His other qualities? This possibility exhausts the being of His other qualities. Does it that of His necessary reality? I think not. Consequently God can either have no perfect conception of Himself at all, or this perfect conception is just as necessarily real, *i.e.* actually existent, as He Himself is. Certainly the image of myself in the mirror is nothing but an empty representation of me, because it only has that of me upon the surface of which beams of light fall. But now if this image had everything, everything without exception, which I have myself, would it then still be a mere empty representation, or not rather a true reduplication of myself? When I believe that I recognise in God a similar reduplication, I perhaps do not so much err as that my language is insufficient for my ideas; and so much at least remains for ever incontrovertible, that they who wish to make the idea thereof popular for comprehension, could scarcely have expressed themselves more intelligibly and suitably than by giving the name of a Son begotten from eternity.

74

AND the doctrine of Original Sin. How, if at last everything were to convince us that man, standing on the first and lowest step of his humanity, is not so entirely master of his actions as to be *able* to obey moral laws?

75

AND the doctrine of the Son's satisfaction. How, if at last all compelled us to assume that God, in spite of that original incapacity of man, chose rather to give him moral laws, and forgive him all transgressions in consideration of

His Son, *i.e.*, in consideration of the self-existent total of all His own perfections, compared with which, and in which, all imperfections of the individual disappear than *not* to give him those laws, and then to exclude him from all moral blessedness, which cannot be conceived of without moral laws?

76

LET it not be objected that speculations of this description upon the mysteries of religion are forbidden. The word mystery signified, in the first ages of Christianity, something quite different from what it means now ; and the cultivation of revealed truths into truths of reason is absolutely necessary, if the human race is to be assisted by them. When they were revealed they were certainly no truths of reason, but they were revealed in order to become such. They were like the "that makes" of the ciphering master, which he says to the boys beforehand, in order to direct them thereby in their reckoning. If the scholars were to be satisfied with the "that makes," they would never learn to calculate, and would frustrate the intention with which their good master gave them a guiding clue in their work.

77

AND why should not we too, by means of a religion whose historical truth, if you will, looks dubious, be conducted in a similar way to closer and better conceptions of the Divine Being, our own nature, our relation to God—truths at which the human reason would never have arrived of itself?

78

IT is not true that speculations upon these things have

ever done harm or become injurious to the body politic. You must reproach, not the speculations, but the folly and the tyranny of checking them. You must lay the blame on those who would not permit men having their own speculations, to exercise them.

79

ON the contrary, speculations of this sort, whatever the result, are unquestionably the most fitting exercises of the human heart, generally, so long as the human heart, generally, is at best only capable of loving virtue for the sake of its eternal blessed consequences.

80

FOR in this selfishness of the human heart, to will to practise the understanding too, only on that which concerns our corporal needs, would be to blunt rather than sharpen it. It absolutely *will* be exercised on spiritual objects, if it is to attain its perfect illumination, and bring out that purity of heart which makes us capable of loving virtue for its own sake alone.

81

OR, is the human species never to arrive at this highest step of illumination and purity?—Never?

82

NEVER !—Let me not think this blasphemy, All Merciful ! Education has its goal in the Race no less than in the Individual. That which is educated is educated for *something*.

83

THE flattering prospects which are opened to the pupil—

the honour and well-being which are painted to him, what are they more than means of educating him to become a man who, when these prospects of honour and well-being have vanished, shall be able to do his *duty*?

84

THIS is the aim of *human* education, and should not the Divine education extend so far? Is that which is successful in the way of Art with the individual, not to be successful in the way of Nature with the whole? Blasphemy! Blasphemy!

85

No! it will come! it will assuredly come! the time of the perfecting, when man, the more convinced his understanding feels itself of an ever better future, will nevertheless not be necessitated to borrow motives of action from this future; for he will do the right because it *is* right, not because arbitrary rewards are annexed thereto, which formerly were intended simply to fix and strengthen his unsteady gaze in recognising the inner, better rewards of well-doing.

86

It will assuredly come! the time of a new eternal Gospel, which is promised us in the primer of the New Testament itself!

87

PERHAPS even some enthusiasts of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries had caught a glimpse of a beam of this new eternal Gospel, and only erred in that they predicted its outburst as so near to their own time.

88

PERHAPS their "Three Ages of the World" were not so empty a speculation after all; and assuredly they had no contemptible views when they taught that the New Covenant must become as much antiquated as the old has been. There remained by them the similarity of the economy of the same God. Ever, to let them speak my words, ever the self-same plan of the education of the race.

89

ONLY they were premature. Only they believed that they could make their contemporaries, who had scarcely outgrown their childhood, without enlightenment, without preparation, men worthy of their *third age*.

90

AND it was just this which made them enthusiasts. The enthusiast often casts true glances into the future, but for this future he cannot wait. He wishes this future accelerated, and accelerated through him. That for which nature takes thousands of years is to mature itself in the moment of his existence. For what possession has he in it if that which he recognises as the best does not become the best in his lifetime? Does he come back? Does he expect to come back? Marvellous only that this enthusiastic expectation does not become more the fashion among enthusiasts.

91

Go thine inscrutable way, eternal Providence! Only let me not despair in Thee because of this inscrutableness. Let me not despair in Thee, even if Thy steps appear to me to be going back. It is not true that the shortest line is always straight.

92

THOU hast on thine eternal way so much to carry on together, so much to do ! so many aside steps to take ! And what if it were as good as proved that the vast slow wheel, which brings mankind nearer to this perfection, is only put in motion by smaller, swifter wheels, each of which contributes its own individual unit thereto ?

93

It is so ! The very same way by which the race reaches its perfection, must every individual man—one sooner, another later—have travelled over. Have travelled over in one and the same life ? Can he have been, in one and the self-same life, a sensual Jew and a spiritual Christian ? Can he in the self-same life have overtaken both ?

94

SURELY not that ! But why should not every individual man have existed more than once upon this world ?

95

Is this hypothesis so laughable merely because it is the oldest ? Because the human understanding, before the sophistries of the Schools had dissipated and debilitated it, lighted upon it at once ?

96

WHY may not even I have already performed those steps of my perfecting which bring to man only temporal punishments and rewards ?

97

AND once more, why not another time all those steps, to perform which the views of eternal rewards so powerfully assist us?

98

WHY should I not come back as often as I am capable of acquiring fresh knowledge, fresh expertness? Do I bring away so much from once, that there is nothing to repay the trouble of coming back?

99

Is this a reason against it? Or, because I forget that I have been here already? Happy is it for me that I do forget. The recollection of my former condition would permit me to make only a bad use of the present. And that which even I must forget *now*, is that necessarily forgotten for ever?

100

OR is it a reason against the hypothesis that so much time would have been lost to me? Lost?—And how much then should I miss? Is not a whole eternity mine?

ANALYSIS OF MR. TENNYSON'S "IN MEMORIAM."

By the late REV. FREDERICK W. ROBERTSON, of Brighton.

*[By Permission, these Notes on the "In Memoriam" are
dedicated to ALFRED TENNYSON, D.C.L., Poet Laureate,
in Token of their Author's Reverence for his Works.]*

PREFACE.

THE following Notes on "In Memoriam" were written by Mr. Robertson at the request of a friend ; and now that the memory of the Writer holds in so many minds a position analogous to that described in the Poem, it has been thought that these Notes might interest the much wider public who know Mr. Robertson only through his works.

The subjoined extract from a Lecture on Poetry delivered by Mr. Robertson several years ago will serve to indicate his general estimate of this exquisite Poem :—

"This Lecture* will be appropriately closed by a brief notice of the last work of our chief living poet, Alfred Tennyson.

* See pp. 92 et seq.

"The poem entitled 'In Memoriam' is a monument erected by friendship to the memory of a gifted son of the historian Hallam. It is divided into a number of cabinet-like compartments, which, with fine and delicate shades of difference, exhibit the various phases through which the bereaved spirit passes from the first shock of despair, dull, hopeless misery and rebellion, up to the dawn of hope, acquiescent trust, and even calm happiness again. In the meanwhile, many a question has been solved, which can only suggest itself when suffering forces the soul to front the realities of our mysterious existence ; such as: Is there indeed a life to come? And if there is, will it be a conscious life? Shall I know that myself? Will there be mutual recognition? continuance of attachments? Shall friend meet friend, and brother brother, as friends and brothers? Or, again: How comes it that one so gifted was taken away so early, in the maturity of his powers, just at the moment when they seemed about to become available to mankind? What means all this, and is there not something wrong? Is the law of Creation Love indeed?

"By slow degrees, all these doubts, and worse, are answered ; not as a philosopher would answer them, nor as a theologian, or a metaphysician, but as it is the duty of a poet to reply, by intuitive faculty, in strains in which Imagination predominates over Thought and Memory. And one of the manifold beauties of this exquisite poem, and which is another characteristic of true Poetry, is that, piercing through all the sophistries and over-refinements of speculation, and the lifeless scepticism of science, it falls back upon the grand, primary, simple truths of our Humanity ; those first principles which underlie all creeds, which belong to our earliest childhood, and on which the wisest and best have

rested through all ages : that all is right : that darkness shall be clear : that God and Time are the only interpreters : that Love is king : that the Immortal is in us : that—which is the key-note of the whole—

‘all is well, though Faith and Form
Be sundered in the night of fear.

“To a coarser class of minds ‘In Memoriam’ appears too melancholy : one long monotone of grief. It is simply one of the most victorious songs that ever poet chanted : with the mysterious undertone, no doubt, of sadness which belongs to all human Joy, in front of the mysteries of death and sorrow ; but that belongs to ‘Paradise Regained’ as well as to ‘Paradise Lost :’ to every true note, indeed, of human triumph, except a Bacchanalian drinking song. And that it should predominate in a monumental record is not particularly unnatural. But readers who never dream of mastering the plan of a work before they pretend to criticise details, can scarcely be expected to perceive that the wail passes into a hymn of solemn and peaceful beauty before it closes.”

ANALYSIS OF "IN MEMORIAM."

I

Loss may be gain when Grief is cherished by Love.

2

FIRST mood of sorrow. The eternal gloom of the yew tree is felt to be congenial.

3

MISGIVINGS respecting the wisdom of cherishing grief seeing it has robbed the universe in its own darkness.

4

STRUGGLE of the Will with the helplessness and aimlessness of grief.

5

THE heart finds relief in metrical expression.

6

INSUFFICIENCY of the common-place consolation suggested by the commonness of bereavement.

7

DESOLATION realised. The well-known door in the dawn of a grey, drizzling morning.

8

FADING of the light from all things in the absence of the loved. The fostered flower.

9

BENISON on the ship which brings back the remains of one "more than a brother."

10

A CERTAIN natural instinct of feeling connects the idea of rest with a Christian grave on shore rather than with one at sea.

11

THE calm.

12

ABSENCE in spirit with the ship.

13

TEARS of the widowed heart.

14

NATURAL conception of the departed as if he were living still. Death at first impossible to realise. (Compare Wordsworth's "We are Seven.")

15

SIMULTANEOUS feelings of calm despair and wild unrest finding something in the tempest both harmonious and discordant with themselves.

16

SURPRISE at the contrast between the apparently inconsistent forms of grief.

17

THE ship arrives; henceforth sacred to imagination.

18

THE quiet English grave. Funeral feelings.

19

THE periodical ebb and flow of grief.

20

MUTE moods of grief, and moods which find utterance.

21

RUDE blame cast upon these complaints: yet great Nature has her way, and Sorrow its rights.

22

THE shadow of death.

23

RECOLLECTIONS of early communings.

24

QUERY : How much the Past owes its seeming perfectness to imagination ?

25

REPLY : Life's burden was halved by Love. It is so halved no longer.

26

THE idea of death less dreadful than the conception of the possibility of forgetting.

27

To have loved is blessedness in itself.

28

SOOTHING power of Christian bells, which blend old associations of boyhood with present bitterness.

29

CHRISTMAS-EVE kept for ancient custom's sake.

30

CHRISTMAS-DAY. Successive moods. Forced mirth succeeded by tears, silence, and then by degrees sweeter hope.

31

PRESENT state of the departed. Questions thereon suggested by the peculiar case of Lazarus.

■

32

LAZARUS' sister. Love superseded and intensified by higher love.

33

DANGER of unsettling simple faith by unfixing it from form.

34

THE universe a dark enigma, and life meaningless, separate from the supposition of immortality.

35

AND love itself without that belief would be a satyr's feeling.

36

THE blessing of having Truth incarnated in a life in Christ.

37

THE apology. Appearance of profanation in the introduction of revealed truths.

38

A dreary path solaced by song.

39

DEATH the spirit's bridal-day. But the bride returns to her friends: not so the spirit.

40

VAGUE suspicion of eternal severance by immeasurable inferiority.

41

YET reunion in place may restore the attitude of loving discipleship in spite of inferiority.

42

If death be unconscious trance, love, as after sleep, will begin again.

43

Is the life beyond merely oblivion, mixed up with gleams of recollection, as here?

44

Is this material existence given to teach the "Me" and the "Not Me"?

45

THE five years of past friendship will be a warm and fresh memory hereafter.

46

Love shrinks from Pantheism, and demands mutual recognition and separate identity hereafter.

47

THESE lays are phases of feeling rather than accurate investigations of the deep questions mooted in them.

48

THEY play upon the surface of grief, but leave its deeps untouched.

49

HE shall be a light, a life, a faith, a hope, a presence.

50

I FEAR not the eye of the (like God) all-seeing dead.

51

I WILL not complain because my love is imperfect.
There is a needs-be even in fault. It may be mourned too
much.

52

THE needs-be of evil is truth in retrospect, falsehood
and perilous in prospect.

53

OUT of the human heart a vague cry anticipates the
final eduction of good from evil.

54

BUT Nature and Experience seeming to negative the
hope of individual immortality, there is nothing left to rest
it on but Faith.

55

THE hideous "No" of Nature.

56

THE echo of the funeral bell.

57

A LOFTIER mood of farewell.

58

[NOT published in the First Edition.]

59

LOWLY love : its misgivings.

60

YET it can plead, even to one sublimely above it, that it is love.

61

THOUGH an unworthy love, once past, perishes.

62

YET the higher being may in some sort feel for the affection born to it by the inferior.

63

DOES the spirit retain tender recollections of its former home and former friend?

64

PERCHANCE, then, that friend's former influence may still incite to noble ends.

65

IN the midst of utter desolation there comes a kindly cheerfulness like that of the blind.

66

ON retiring to rest, Fancy pictures the appearance of the Tablet in different hours and lights.

67

IN dreams, by an illusion, the sadness of the mourner is transferred to the lost, and he is conceived of as sad too.

68

VISION of the Angel and the Crown of thorns.

69

DARKNESS. Attempt to recall the well-known features. Fancy fantastically blends the image of the lost with the objects of a confused phantasmagoria.

70

At last one epoch of past history presents itself with singular vividness.

71

ANNIVERSARY of the loss. A grey, cheerless day.

72

REGRET for the cutting short of the promise of fame, stilled, however, by the thought that all fame fades, and that it is enough to know that there was that which would have achieved fame.

73

Now that he is dead, his kindred with the wisest and best becomes recognised as a family likeness.

74

SOMEWHERE, surely, in the universe, he is now achieving fame.

75

FLEETINGNESS of reputation here.

76

THESE lays will be forgotten : but they are breathed not for fame, only for relief.

77

ANOTHER Christmas. Tears are dried. There is even

mirth ; but beneath, the quiet sense of something lost still remains.

78

FRIENDSHIP, why more than brotherhood. A brother is oneself over again. A friend is the supplement of deficiencies.

79

How would he have felt my loss ? Let me try so to feel his.

80

WELL, death has matured the love which I might mourn as prematurely cut off.

81

THE real bitterness of death is the interruption of communion.

82

THE new year. Renewal of hope.

83

A CONCEPTION of what he would have been had he lived to be united by ties of blood : a blended life and united death.

84

A SECOND friendship possible ; but not equal to the first.

85

PEACE coming through natural influences.

86

RECOLLECTIONS of the college friendship.

87

THE contrasts of fierce grief and wild joy in the nightingale's song.

88

RECOLLECTIONS of his going down to the country retreat.

89

NO alteration of circumstances, no new relationships, could make his return to life unwelcome.

90

THE thought of him associates itself brightly with the spring.

91

THE certainty of separation has become fixed. (Contrast this with the sentiment of No. 14.)

92

YET surely, his very self might return. Oh, come !

93

SERENITY of soul needful for communion with the dead.

94

REPERUSAL of his letters after a summer evening spent upon the lawn.

95

How he emerged into faith through doubt.

96

A FRIENDSHIP which resembled a marriage, the union of male and female spirit.

97

VIENNA, where he died ; a glorious city—to his conception, dismal.

98

ANOTHER anniversary of his death. To many, as to me, one of sorrow. They are my brothers.

99

ON this day all things bring him back to me by association : and he dies afresh.

100

THOUGHTS on quitting the home of childhood. Round all these spots and objects new associations will gather for strangers.

101

EVERY spot has a twofold association : one of happy childhood, the other of bereaved friendship.

102

THE night before the departure a vision presents the thought, that, his memory going with us, the spirit of all that is wise and good and graceful fails with us in the life-voyage.

103

THE sound of the unfamiliar church bells (of the new parish) heard by night.

104

CHRISTMAS-EVE in the new home—how different ! Old customs cannot be transplanted hither.

105

NEW year bells. "Forget the things behind."

106

HIS birthday celebrated cheerfully.

107

HUMAN sympathy needful to ripen the fruit of sorrow.

108

WHAT he was.

109

HIS influence on others.

110

THE perfect gentleman.

111

THE inexhaustibleness and growth of his nature.

112

ONE who would have been equal to all emergencies.

113

KNOWLEDGE less high than charity. In him both were blended.

114

SPRING : and Spring hopes.

115

REVIVING Nature suggests feelings in which regret for past friendship passes away in anticipations of a stronger bond which is to be.

Y

116

THIS separation will only enhance the blessedness of meeting.

117

THE past history of creation, passing from chaos into life, is a type of our existence, which surely is to ascend from the animal into the spiritual. He is nobler than he was.

118

MEMORY can recall and dwell upon the thought of him now without a pang.

119

THE good which has come from these utterances, proves the ethereal nature of our humanity, which is influenced by causes more subtle and refined than the phrenologist and materialist dream of.

120

HESPER-PHOSPHOR. Grief has slowly changed its mood, as the evening star passes into the morning star.

121

A profound sense of blessedness, amounting even to ecstasy.

122

No farewell to him. Amidst the changefulness of the outward world, my spirit remains steadfast.

123

THE atheism of the Understanding is annihilated by the Heart. We feel God—do not find Him out.

124

EVEN in the bitterest notes of these strains, Love and Hope were never entirely absent.

125

LOVE says, "All is well."

126

AMIDST the anarchy of nations, all is moving on to God, and *his* spirit knows it.

127

THIS struggle and victory of Love with doubt have given an insight into the course of human things, and taught trust in the final issue.

128

POWER in this friendship to ennoble life ; and reciprocal influence of a noble life to intensify the friendship.

129

HE becomes an universal Presence, to be felt everywhere, and for ever.

130

THERE are truths which are to be proved only by faith and feeling.

A SELECTION FROM THE NOTICES
OF
MR. ROBERTSON'S SERMONS,
AND OF THE
LIFE AND LETTERS OF F. W. ROBERTSON.

BY THE REV. STOPFORD A. BROOKE, M.A.

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[BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE, August, 1862.]

"For while hapless Englishmen complain in the papers, and in private, in many a varied wail, over the sermons they have to listen to, it is very apparent that the work of the preacher has not fallen in any respect out of estimation. Here is a book which has gone through as great a number of editions as the most popular novel. It bears Mudie's stamp upon its dingy boards, and has all those marks of arduous service which are only to be seen in books which belong to great public libraries. It is thumbed, dog's-eared, pencil-marked, worn by much perusal. Is it then a novel? On the contrary, it is a volume of sermons. A fine, tender, and lofty mind, full of thoughtfulness, full of devotion, has herein left his legacy to his country. It is not rhetoric or any vulgar excitement of eloquence that charms so many readers to the book, so many hearers to this preacher's feet. It is not with the action of a Demosthenes, with outstretched arms and countenance of flame, that he presses his gospel upon his audience. On the contrary, when we read those calm and lofty utterances, this preacher seems seated, like his Master, with the multitude palpitating round, but no agitation or passion in his own thoughtful, contemplative breast. The Sermons of Robertson, of Brighton, have few of the exciting qualities of oratory. Save for the charm of a singularly pure and lucid style, their almost sole attraction consists in their power of instruction, in their faculty of opening up the mysteries of life and truth. It is pure teaching, so far as that ever can be administered to a popular audience, which is offered to us in these volumes."

[EDINBURGH CHRISTIAN MAGAZINE.]

"They are Sermons of a bold, uncompromising thinker—of a man resolute for the truth of God, and determined in the strength of God's grace to make that truth clear, to brush away all the fine-spun sophistries and half-truths by which the cunning sins of men have hidden it. . . . There must be a great and true heart, where there is a great and true preacher. And in that, beyond everything else, lay the secret of Mr. Robertson's influence. His Sermons show evidence enough of acute logical power. His analysis is exquisite in its subtleness and delicacy. . . . With Mr. Robertson style is but the vehicle, not the substitute for thought. Eloquence, poetry, scholarship, originality—his Sermons show proof enough of these to put him on a level with the foremost men of his time. But, after all, their charm lies in the warm, loving, sympathetic heart, in the well-disciplined mind of the true Christian, in his noble scorn of all lies, of all things mean and crooked, in his brave battling for right, even when wrong seems crowned with success, in his honest simplicity and singleness of purpose, in the high and holy tone—as if, amid the discord of earth, he heard clear, though far off, the perfect harmony of heaven ; in the fiery earnestness of his love for Christ, the devotion of his whole being to the goodness and truth revealed in him."

[CHURCH OF ENGLAND MONTHLY REVIEW.]

"It is hardly too much to say, that had the Church of England produced no other fruit in the present century, this work alone would be amply sufficient to acquit her of the charge of barrenness. . . . The reputation of Mr. Robertson's Sermons is now so wide-spread, that any commendation of ours may seem superfluous. We will therefore simply, in conclusion, recommend such of our readers as have not yet made their acquaintance, to read them carefully and thoughtfully, and they will find in them more deeply suggestive matter than in almost any book published in the present century."

[MORNING POST.]

"They are distinguished by masterly exposition of Scriptural truths and the true spirit of Christian charity."

[BRITISH QUARTERLY.]

"These Sermons are full of thought and beauty, and admirable illustrations of the ease with which a gifted and disciplined mind can make the obscure transparent, the difficult plain. There is not a Sermon that does not furnish evidence of originality without extravagance, of discrimination without tediousness, and of piety without cant or conventionalism."

[ECLECTIC REVIEW.]

"We hail with unaffected delight the appearance of these volumes. The Sermons are altogether out of the common style. They are strong, free, and beautiful utterances of a gifted and cultivated mind. Occasionally, the expression of theological sentiment fails fully to represent our own thought, and we sometimes detect tendencies with which we cannot sympathize: but, taken as a whole, the discourses are fine specimens of a high order of preaching."

[GUARDIAN.]

"Very beautiful in feeling, and occasionally striking and forcible in conception to a remarkable degree. . . . Even in the imperfect shape in which their deceased author left them, they are very remarkable compositions."

[CHRISTIAN REMEMBRANCER.]

"We should be glad if all preachers more united with ourselves, preached such Sermons as these."

[WESTMINSTER REVIEW.]

"To those who affectionately remember the author, they will recall, though imperfectly, his living eloquence and his living truthfulness."

[GLOBE.]

"Mr. Robertson, of Brighton, is a name familiar to most of us, and honoured by all to whom it is familiar. A true servant of Christ, a bold and heart-stirring preacher of the Gospel, his teaching was unlike the teaching of most clergymen, for it was beautified and intensified by genius. New truth, new light, streamed from each well-worn text when he handled it."

[BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE.]

"When teaching of this description keeps the popular ear and secures the general attention, it is unquestionable proof that the office of the preacher has, in no way, lost its hold on the mind of the people. The acceptance of a voice so unimpassioned and thoughtful, so independent of all vulgar auxiliaries, so intent upon bringing every theme it touches to the illustration and sanctifying of the living life of the hour, that which alone can be mended, and purified, and sanctified, is a better tribute to the undying office of the preacher than the success of a hundred Spurgeons. Attention and interest are as eager as ever where there is in reality any instruction to bestow."

[LITERARY GAZETTE.]

"In earnestness of practical appeal, and in eloquent and graceful diction, Mr. Robertson has few rivals, and these characteristics are sufficient to account for his unusual popularity."

[NATIONAL REVIEW.]

"A volume of very fine Sermons, quite equal to the previous series."

[BRIGHTON EXAMINER.]

"There is in the Sermons in this volume the same freshness, vigour of thought and felicity of expression, as characterised whatever Mr. Robertson said."

[ECONOMIST.]

"Mr. Robertson's Sermons have the great and rare merit of neutralising by a more charitable and affectionate spirit, and by a wider intelligence, all that may appear rigid and *doctrinaire* in the Church of England. The result seems to have been his special mission: it most fully explains the mind of the man. . . . We recommend the Sermons to the perusal of our readers. They will find in them thought of so rare and beautiful a description, an earnestness of mind so steadfast in the search of truth, and a charity so pure and all-embracing, that we cannot venture to offer praise, which would be, in this case, almost as presumptuous as criticism."

[SATURDAY REVIEW.]

"When Mr. Robertson died, his name was scarcely known beyond the circle of his own private friends, and of those among whom he had laboured in his calling. Now, every word he wrote is eagerly sought for and affectionately treasured up, and meets with the most reverent and admiring welcome from men of all parties and all shades of opinion. . . . To those that find in his writings what they themselves want, he is a teacher quite beyond comparison—his words having a meaning, his thoughts a truth and depth, which they cannot find elsewhere. And they never look to him in vain. . . . He fixes himself upon the recollection as a most original and profound thinker, and as a man in whom excellence puts on a new form. . . . There are many persons, and the number increases every year, to whom Robertson's writings are the most stable, satisfactory, and exhaustless form of religious teaching which the nineteenth century has given—the most wise, suggestive, and practical."

[BRIGHTON HERALD.]

"To our thinking, no compositions of the same class, at least since the days of Jeremy Taylor, can be compared with these Sermons delivered to the congregation of Trinity Chapel, Brighton, by their late minister. They have that power over the mind which belongs only to the highest works of genius: they stir the soul to its inmost depths: they move the affections, raise the imagination, bring out the higher and spiritual part of our nature by the continual appeal that is made to it, and tend to make us, at the same time, humble and aspiring—merciful to others and doubtful of ourselves."

[From a SERMON preached at the CONSECRATION of the BISHOP of NORWICH, by the REV. J. H. GURNEY, late of MARYLEBONE.]

"I do not commit myself to all his theology; I may differ from the preacher in some things, and listen doubtfully to others. But I know of no modern sermons at once so suggestive and so inspiring, with reference to the whole range of Christian duty. He is fresh and original without being recondite: plain-spoken without severity; and discusses some of the exciting topics of the day without provoking strife or

lowering his tone as a Christian teacher. He delivers his message, in fact, like one who is commissioned to call men off from trifles and squabbles, and conventional sins and follies, to something higher and nobler than their common life: like a man in earnest, too, avoiding technicalities, speaking his honest mind in phrases that are his own, and with a directness from which there is no escape. O that a hundred like him were given us by God, and placed in prominent stations throughout our land!"

[GUARDIAN.]

"Without anything of that artificial symmetry which the traditional division into heads was apt to display, they present each reflection in a distinct method of statement, clearly and briefly worked out; the sentences are short and terse, as in all popular addresses they should be; the thoughts are often very striking, and entirely out of the track of ordinary sermonising. In matters of doctrine such novelty is sometimes unsafe; but the language is that of one who tries earnestly to penetrate into the very centre of the truth he has to expound, and differs as widely as possible from the sceptic's doubt or the controversialist's mistake. More frequently Mr. Robertson deals with questions of practical life, of public opinion, and of what we may call social casuistry—turning the light of Christian ethics upon this unnoticed though familiar ground. The use of a carriage on Sunday, the morality of feeing a railway porter against his employers' rules, are topics not too small for illustration or application of his lessons in divine truth."

[BRIGHTON GAZETTE.]

"As an author, Mr. Robertson was, in his lifetime, unknown; for with the exception of one or two addresses, he never published, having a singular disinclination to bring his thoughts before the public in the form of published sermons. As a minister, he was beloved and esteemed for his unswerving fidelity to his principles and his fearless propagation of his religious views. As a townsman, he was held in the highest estimation; his hand and voice being ever ready to do all in his power to advance the moral and social position of the working man. It was not till after his decease, which event created a sensation and demonstration such as Brighton never before or since witnessed, that his works were subjected to public criticism. It was then found

that in the comparatively retired minister of Trinity Chapel there had existed a man possessed of consummate ability and intellect of the highest order; that the sermons laid before his congregation were replete with the subtleties of intellect, and bore evidence of the keenest perception and most exalted catholicity. His teaching was of an extremely liberal character, and if fair to assign a man possessed of such a universality of sympathy to any party, we should say that he belonged to what is denominated the 'Broad Church.' We, with many others, cannot agree in the fullest extent of his teaching, but, at the same time, feel bound to accord the tribute due to his genius."

[MORNING CHRONICLE.]

"A volume of very excellent Sermons, by the late lamented Incumbent of Trinity Chapel, Brighton."

[TITAN.]

"But the Sermons now under notice are, we venture to say, taking all the circumstances into consideration, the most remarkable discourses of the age. . . . They are throughout vital with the rarest force, burning with an earnestness perhaps never surpassed, and luminous with the light of genius. . . . We suspect that even Brighton little knew what a man Providence had placed in its midst."

On the "*Analysis of Mr. Tennyson's In Memoriam*:"—

[GUARDIAN.]

"An endeavour to give, in a few weighty words, the key-note (so to speak) of each poem in the series. Those will best appreciate the amount of success attained by Mr. Robertson who try to do the same work better."

From a few of the Notices on Mr. Robertson's "*Lectures on the Epistles to the Corinthians*:"—

[MORNING POST.]

"It was Mr. Robertson's custom every Sunday afternoon, instead of preaching from one text, to expound an entire chapter of some book in the Scriptures. The present volume is made up from notes of fifty-six discourses of this kind. 'Some people were startled by the introduction of what they called secular subjects into the pulpit. But the lecturer in all his ministrations refused to recognize the distinction so drawn. He said that the whole life of a Christian was sacred—that common every-day doings, whether of a trade, or of a profession, or the minuter details of a woman's household life, were the arenas in which trial and temptation arose; and that therefore it became the Christian minister's duty to enter into this family working life with his people, and help them to understand its meaning, its trials, and its compensations.' It is enough to add that the lectures now given to the public are written in this spirit."

[CRITIC.]

"Such discourses as these before us, so different from the shallow rhapsodies or tedious hair-splitting which are now so much in vogue, may well make us regret that Mr. Robertson can never be heard again in the pulpit. This single volume would in itself establish a reputation for its writer."

[BRIGHTON HERALD.]

"... Were there no name on the title-page, the spirit which shines forth in these lectures could but be recognized as that of the earnest, true-hearted man, the deep thinker, the sympathizer with all kinds of human trouble, the aspirant for all things holy, and one who joined to these rare gifts, the faculty of speaking to his fellow-men in such a manner as to fix their attention and win their love. . . . In whatever spirit the volume is read—of doubt, of criticism, or of full belief in the truths it teaches—it can but do good; it can but leave behind the conviction that here was a genuine, true-hearted man, gifted with the highest intellect, inspired by the most disinterested

motives and the purest love for his fellow-men, and that the fountain at which he warmed his heart and kindled his eloquence was that which flows from Christ."

[BRITISH QUARTERLY REVIEW.]

"This volume will be a welcome gift to many an intelligent and devout mind. There are few of our modern questions, theological or ecclesiastical, that do not come up for discussion in the course of these Epistles to the Christians at Corinth."

[MORNING HERALD.]

"No one can read these lectures without being charmed by their singular freshness and originality of thought, their earnest, simple eloquence, and their manly piety. There is no mawkish sentiment, no lukewarm, semi-religious twaddle, smacking of the *Record*; no proclamation of party views or party opinions, but a broad, healthy, living, and fervent exposition of one of the most difficult books in the Bible. Every page is full of personal earnestness and depth of feeling; but every page is also free from the slightest trace of vanity and egotism. The words come home to the reader's heart as the utterance of a sincere man who felt every sentence which flowed from his lips."

[PRESS.]

"One of the most marked features of these lectures is the deep feeling which the preacher had of the emptiness and hollowness of the conventional religionism of the day. The clap-trap of popular ministers, the pride and uncharitableness of exclusive Evangelicalism, the pomp and pretension of ritualism and priestly affectation—the miserable Pharisaism which is lurking underneath them all—form the subject of many strikingly true and often cutting remarks. He has no patience with the unrealities of sectarian purism and pedantic orthodoxy. His constant cry, the constant struggle of his soul is for reality. Hence while his views of objective truth are at times deficient, or, at least, very imperfectly stated, he leaves a deep impress of subjective religion upon the mind, by a style of teaching which, far from uninteresting, is yet more eminently suggestive."

A SELECTION FROM THE
NOTICES BY THE PRESS OF
"THE LIFE AND LETTERS OF THE LATE
REV. F. W. ROBERTSON."

[THE SPECTATOR.]

"No book published since the 'Life of Dr. Arnold' has produced so strong an impression on the moral imagination and spiritual theology of England as we may expect from these volumes. Even for those who knew Mr. Robertson well, and for many who knew *him*, as they thought, better than his Sermons, the free and full discussion of the highest subjects in the familiar letters so admirably selected by the Editor of Mr. Robertson's *Life*, will give a far clearer insight into his remarkable character and inspire a deeper respect for his clear and manly intellect. Mr. Brooke has done his work as Dr. Stanley did his in writing the 'Life of Arnold,' and it is not possible to give higher praise. . . . Everyone will talk of Mr. Robertson, and no one of Mr. Brooke, because Mr. Brooke has thought much of his subject, nothing of himself, and hence the figure which he wished to present comes out quite clear and keen, without any interposing haze of literary vapour."

[THE CHRISTIAN WORLD.]

"The Life of Robertson of Brighton supplies a very unique illustration of the way in which a man may attain his highest fame after he has passed away from earth. There are few who make any pretension to an acquaintance with modern literature who do not know something of Mr. Robertson's works. His sermons are indisputably ranked with the highest sacred classics. . . . The publication of his 'Life and Letters' helps us to some information which is very precious, and explains much mystery that hangs around the name of the great Brighton preacher. It will be generally admitted that these two volumes will furnish means for estimating the character of Mr. Robertson which are not supplied in any or all of his published works. . . . There was no artificiality or show about the pulpit production, no half-utterances

or whispers of solemn belief ; but there was the natural restraint which would be imposed by a true gentleman upon his words when speaking to mixed congregations. Many of us wanted to know how he talked and wrote when the restraint was removed. This privilege is granted to us in these volumes. . . . There was no romance of scene and circumstance in the life of Frederick Robertson ; but there was more than romance about the real life of the man. In some respects it was like the life of a new Elijah. . . . A more thoughtful, suggestive, and beautiful preacher never entered a pulpit ; a simpler and braver man never lived ; a truer Christian never adorned any religious community. His life and death were *vicarious*, as he himself might have put it. He lived and died for others, for us all. The sorrows and agonies of his heart pressed rare music out of it, and the experience of a terribly bitter life leaves a wealth of thought and reflection never more than equalled in the history of men."

[THE GUARDIAN.]

"With all drawbacks of what seem to us imperfect taste, an imperfect standard of character, and an imperfect appreciation of what there is in the world beyond a given circle of interest, the book does what a biography ought to do—it shows us a remarkable man, and it gives us the means of forming our own judgment about him. It is not a tame panegyric or a fancy picture. The main portion of the book consists of Mr. Robertson's own letters, and his own account of himself, and we are allowed to see him, in a great degree at least, as he really was. . . . It is the record of a genuine spontaneous character, seeking its way, its duty, its perfection, with much sincerity and elevation of purpose, many anxieties and sorrows, and not, we doubt not, without much of the fruits that come with real self-devotion ; a record disclosing a man with great faults and conspicuous blanks in his nature.

[THE MORNING POST.]

"Mr. Brooke has done good service in giving to the world so faithful a sketch of so worthy a man. It would have been a reproach to the Church if this enduring and appropriate memorial had not been erected to one who was so entirely devoted to its service ; and the labour of love, for such it evidently was, was committed to no unskilful hands. . . Mr. Robertson's epistolary writings—gathered in these valuable volumes—often unstudied, always necessarily from their nature free and unrestrained, but evidencing depth and vigour of thought, clear perception, varied knowledge, sound judgment, earnest piety, are doubtless destined

to become as widely known and as largely beneficial as his published Sermons. It is impossible to peruse them without receiving impressions for good, and being persuaded that they are the offspring of no ordinary mind."

[THE MORNING HERALD.]

"Mr. Brooke has done his own work as a biographer with good sense, feeling, and taste. . . . These volumes are of real value to all thoughtful readers. For many a year we have had no such picture of a pure and noble and well spent life."

[THE ATHENÆUM.]

"There is something here for all kinds of readers, but the higher a man's mind and the more general his sympathies, the keener will be his interest in the 'Life of Robertson.'"

[THE NONCONFORMIST.]

"As no English sermons of the century have been so widely read, and as few leaders of religious thought have exerted (especially by works in so much of an unperfected and fragmentary character) so penetrating and powerful an influence on the spiritual tendencies of the times, we can well believe that no biography since Arnold's will presently be possible to be compared with this, for the interest excited by it in the minds of readers who consciously live in the presence of the invisible and eternal, who feel the pressure of difficult questions and painful experiences, and who seek reality and depth, and freedom in the life and activity of the Church of Christ. . . . Mr. Brooke has produced a 'Life of Robertson' which will not unworthily compare with Dean Stanley's 'Life of Arnold,' and which, with that, and Ryland's 'Life of Foster,' and the 'Life of Channing,' is likely to be prized as one of the most precious records of genuine manly and godly excellence."

[THE MORNING STAR.]

"The beautiful work which Mr. Brooke has written contains few, if any, romantic episodes. It is the life of a man who worked hard and died early. . . . Mr. Brooke has acted wisely in allowing Mr. Robertson to speak so fully for himself, and in blending his letters with his narrative, and arranging them in chronological order. These letters are in themselves a mine of intellectual wealth. They contain little of table-talk or parlour gossip; but they abound with many of his best and most ripened thoughts on multitudes of subjects, political, literary, and scientific, as well as theological. We wish we could present our readers

with extracts from them ; but even if we had space, it would be unfair to the writer to quote disjointed fragments from a correspondence which now belongs to the literature of the country. . . . Mr. Brooke has performed his responsible task as a biographer and an editor in a spirit of just and discriminating appreciation, and with admirable ability."

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